

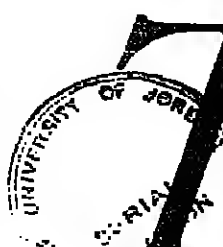


by
Airage

Opposite bar

Saturday February 21 1998

Abu Dhabi 0.50
Alaska 0.50
Algeria 0.50
Angola 0.50
Argentina 0.50
Australia 0.50
Austria 0.50
Belgium 0.50
Bolivia 0.50
Brazil 0.50
Canada 0.50
Chad 0.50
Czechia 0.50
Denmark 0.50
Ecuador 0.50
Egypt 0.50
Finland 0.50
France 0.50
Germany 0.50
Ghana 0.50
Greece 0.50
Hong Kong 0.50
Hungary 0.50
India 0.50
Indonesia 0.50
Iran 0.50
Iraq 0.50
Israel 0.50
Italy 0.50
Japan 0.50
Jordan 0.50
Kazakhstan 0.50
Kenya 0.50
Kuwait 0.50
Latvia 0.50
Lebanon 0.50
Lithuania 0.50
Luxembourg 0.50
Madagascar 0.50
Malawi 0.50
Malaysia 0.50
Maldives 0.50
Mali 0.50
Mauritania 0.50
Mauritius 0.50
Mexico 0.50
Morocco 0.50
Netherlands 0.50
New Zealand 0.50
Norway 0.50
Oman 0.50
Pakistan 0.50
Palestine 0.50
Peru 0.50
Poland 0.50
Portugal 0.50
Qatar 0.50
Romania 0.50
Russia 0.50
Saudi Arabia 0.50
Senegal 0.50
Sierra Leone 0.50
Singapore 0.50
Slovakia 0.50
Slovenia 0.50
South Africa 0.50
Spain 0.50
Sweden 0.50
Switzerland 0.50
Taiwan 0.50
Thailand 0.50
Tanzania 0.50
Turkey 0.50
Ukraine 0.50
USA 0.50
USSR 0.50



Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

INTERNATIONAL
NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

The Week

Down on the farm..

Plus six pages of sport



Arts

..and on the pier

Page 18

Catherine Bennett

Well-fed in a garret?

Saturday opinion, page 9

Flaunting the flag



British model Honor Fraser, with the Union Jack painted on her body, launches London Fashion Week at the Natural History Museum yesterday. The week will feature 65 catwalk shows and 138 exhibitors

PHOTOGRAPH BY IAN WALDE

Saddam allies assassinated in rebel strikes

Ian Black
Diplomatic Editor

AS THE United Nations secretary-general, Kofi Annan, arrived in Baghdad for talks yesterday, evidence has emerged of armed attacks in recent days on leading officials of Saddam Hussein's regime in southern Iraq, where Shia Muslims rebelled in 1991.

Two high-ranking Ba'ath party members were shot dead by unidentified assassins as they left a military training ground in the southern port of Basra around February 10, the Guardian has learned.

A second attack took place in Karbala on Wednesday, when two masked men gunned down the head of security for the region, a police chief and another senior Ba'ath official. Checkpoints were later set up and an unspecified number of young people arrested.

Over the last 10 days, identical slogans have appeared in Karbala and Najaf, the epicentre of an abortive uprising at the end of the 1991 Gulf war. "In this oil state of the Middle East, we can't even fill our cars with petrol," the graffiti reads. "We are led by a useless coward."

Iraqi opposition groups are routinely able to provide reports that are cumulatively impressive but almost impossible to verify. This latest report suggests serious and well-organised armed activity, albeit on a small scale, at what could be a crucial time.

There are certainly a lot of people thinking about exploiting an air strike if it looks as if the West will act," said one official who monitors Iraq closely. "But there are also signs that the regime is taking preventive measures. Not only is the talk of a rising



Kofi Annan is greeted by Iraq's Tariq Aziz, right

Kofi Annan said in Baghdad last night he was reasonably confident he would leave with a package acceptable to all, reports Julian Borger on page 13.

Leader comment and letters, page 9; Matthew Engel, page 9; Ian Mayes' Open Door, The Week page 14

credible but so are the rebels' fears of being abandoned by the West."

Resistance operations in southern Iraq are sporadic and opportunistic. But intelligence agencies say they have only a partial picture of the internal situation.

The regime's anxiety over a possible uprising led to the recent execution of rebels who had taken part in the 1991 attempt. Qusay Hussein, the 30-year-old son of President Saddam, has taken over responsibility for the special security department, Amn al Khass, the most powerful of Saddam's five security intelligence networks. He used the cover of the execution of criminals to dispose of the rebels and political prisoners who had been sentenced to 15 years for taking part in the uprising. The executions began in Abu Ghraib

prison on December 18 and went on for four days. There are no reliable figures for the numbers killed.

According to one telling detail, those now volunteering for military service include many relatives of the estimated 16,000 people who disappeared or were killed in 1991.

"If there is an air strike there will be another uprising, but what people are scared of is the bloodbath that happened last time when the Republican Guard attacked the rebel cities," said one Iraqi.

"First they dropped leaflets and then they announced on loudspeakers that the people had to leave their houses or be hit by chemical weapons. When the people came on to the streets, the Republican Guards opened fire on them. In parks, in cities all over the south people were tied together by one arm and one leg and then shot in front of everyone."

He continued: "People are very, very scared but their biggest fear is that if they rise up they will be deserted again by the West. In 1991 15 of the 18 governorates were held by the rebels for three weeks. They were almost there."

"They got as far as 30 miles south of Baghdad and 30 miles north, but they needed the Americans to help them with air power."

Some experts say an uprising would follow only if the US and Britain mounted massive and effective attacks. Making a distinction — as some planners have indicated — between the loyal Republican Guard and other elite units, and the regular army could encourage disaffected officers, with access to military communications, to change side.

President Saddam is likely to have made precautionary moves to disperse the Republican Guards, conceal their armour and substitute decoys, as well as tightening internal security. Even if his troops are defeated, there is no guarantee he would be unseated as long as his security forces and paramilitary police obey orders.

"People would have to feel that everything had changed dramatically to dare to come out on the streets," said Dr Charles Tripp, an Iraqi expert at London University.

Trimble furious, Adams angry over Sinn Fein bar

John Mullin
Ireland Correspondent

SINN Fein was finally ordered out of the multi-party talks on Northern Ireland's future yesterday, but its determined opposition to the move means it will miss only six days of negotiations.

The British and Irish governments, who had wrangled over how long Sinn Fein should be excluded from the talks, ruled it could return on March 9, as long as there are no more breaches of the IRA ceasefire. It was suspended after Ronnie Flanagan, RUC Chief Constable, said the IRA was responsible for two murders in Belfast.

Unionists were furious over the two-week expulsion. David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionists, said: "It shows life is cheap. This has become a dirty process."

The Ulster Democratic Party, suspended four weeks ago after three loyalist killings, was told it could return on Monday, said Sinn Fein had been shown favouritism. His party had been given no date for a return when it was expelled.

Stipulating the date for a Sinn Fein comeback indicates that the governments are moving towards the end game. They plan to forward a blueprint settlement in early April before simultaneous referendums on both sides of the border, probably on May 1. The talks may go into secret session for that period.

It had also been widely predicted that Sinn Fein would be allowed to rejoin the talks before March 17, when a delegation has been invited to the White House St Patrick's Day celebrations in Washington.

David Andrews, Irish foreign affairs minister, said Bertie Ahern, the taoiseach, had bowed to a Sinn Fein demand for an urgent meeting.

Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein president, also wants to see Tony Blair. He said the governments' responses would determine whether his party would be back at Stormont in two weeks time. The suspension could give the party added leverage.

Moments after the announcement at Stormont, Sinn Fein dropped its legal challenge to its suspension at the high court in Dublin. It said it was angry that the governments had made their decision before the judgment.

Amid fears of violent backlash in republican communities, Mr Adams appealed for calm. Demonstrations began within minutes of the decision, and there were minor clashes with army and police.

Mr Adams said: "The anger is palpable, particularly in nationalist areas. I appeal to everyone to channel their anger and frustration at today's decision into calm and disciplined protest."

He added: "Sinn Fein's peace strategy has been about turn to page 2, column 6"

Leader comment, page 8

Ear marks out serial burglar

Print leads to jail and makes legal history

John Ezard

CALVIN Sewell is no great shakes at the technology of modern housebreaking. But he possesses one gift which thieves through the ages would have envied. He has the ears of a cat.

Just by pressing an ear to a door or window — and keeping it there for some time — he can tell infallibly whether anyone is at home.

He has proved this with at least 13 immaculate burglaries, netting £4,000 worth of property. Mr Sewell, aged 25, of Balham, south London, also stole a Snoopy dog.

Yesterday, however, thief-tracing technology caught up with him. Even Judge David Elfer paid tribute to his "long and sometimes very successful" career. But — trapped by



The ear that finally trapped serial burglar Calvin Sewell

his earprints — Mr Sewell was sentenced to a year in prison after admitting five burglary charges.

He is the first criminal in Britain to have a mould taken of his ears by police. Prosecuting, Simon Medland told Southwark crown court that his break-ins were carried out in either

Clapham or Vauxhall, south London.

As used by forensic staff dusted for fingerprints, but "a peculiar aspect of an otherwise ordinary series of burglaries" quickly became apparent — the profusion of ears turned out to be other prints.

Mr Sewell would have been a suspect anyway because of previous convictions dating back to 1989, Mr Medland said. But the earprints — which are unique in each individual — led police to make an accurate mould of him.

The perfect match led quickly to charges. Judge Elfer told him he must be all too well aware of the misery his crimes caused.

Outside court, Detective Constable Alan Hodgson said he would encourage fellow officers to watch for similar giveaway prints.

Mr Sewell is already serving a sentence of three years and nine months imposed earlier for other burglaries. This, plus his new sentence, gives him ample time to consider the use of an ear trumpet.

Inside

Britain

Seven men convicted for taking part in private sex parties which were recorded on video walked free from court

4

World News

Questions raised about whether the US will attack Iraq when it has been expelled

6

Finance

Use of pre-paid electronic smart cards to pay water companies for water has been outlawed by a High Court judge

11

Sport

Defeat for England against Wales in the first of two Test matches in the 1997/98 season

24

Weather 2; Obituaries 7; Comment 8; Crossword 12

The Week
Crossword 24
Sport 19-24



INTERNATIONAL CALLS
If you're paying more than this it's a rip off!

OYSTEL SUPER-SAVERS		
London Call		
	BT Oystel	BT Oystel
	24p	10p
SINGAPORE 59p	23p	CANADA 24p
AUSTRALIA 49p	13p	UAE £1.02
PAKISTAN £1.34	54p	MALAYSIA 77p
BANGLADESH £1.33	55p	HONG KONG 59p

Based on current rates. Prices based on BT daytime peak rates before discount.

CALL FREE ON
0800 3761666
See us at the Oystel Super-Savers event

OYSTEL
INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS

No-one goes further to keep you closer

Voice of al Fayed quits

Spokesman says split is amicable

Owen Bowcott

MICHAEL COLE, the urban spokesman for multi-millionaire Mohamed al Fayed, yesterday announced he was taking immediate retirement from his high-profile post at Harrods department store.

His abrupt departure, cushioned by an annual pension said to be worth more than £50,000, follows a gruelling period during which he has had to bear the brunt of intense media scrutiny over the deaths of Diana, Princess of Wales, and the tycoon's son, Dodi.

Mr Cole, 55 next month, was said to be on holiday yesterday and could not be contacted but Harrods issued a joint statement in which he and Mr al Fayed paid generous tributes to one another.

"Although I leave with much sadness, it has always been my intention to retire at the age of 55," Mr Cole said. "I have made many lasting friendships, particularly with Mohamed al Fayed and his family, and enjoyed being so closely involved in the growth and development of Harrods."

For his part, Mr al Fayed declared that the former BBC royal affairs correspondent had "provided invaluable support to me and my family and of course to Harrods over the past 10 years."

He added: "I am pleased to count him amongst my staunchest friends. He has served both me and the company loyally and with the highest degree of professionalism."

A birthday party will be

held next month in his honour in the private dining room at Harrods — proof, insisted a company spokesman, that the parting is an amicable one.

Mr Cole became a household name in the months following the deaths of Dodi and Princess Diana in a Paris car crash on August 31 last year.

It was suggested yesterday that Mr Cole had quit in exasperation at his former employer's erratic behaviour. Several sources pointed to recent stories in the Daily Mirror in which Mr al Fayed alleged that his son and the princess died as a result of a secret conspiracy. The sources said this suggested that Mr Cole was no longer in control.

Gill Christophers, one of several who have taken over his role, yesterday denied that there had been any falling out.

"We have known about his departure for a week," she said. "The decision for him to retire at the age of 55 was entirely his own."

In the days following the car crash, Mr Cole admitted how hard his task had become, saying: "If it is left to me to be the lightning rod of press fury then so be it, because that means nothing in comparison to what has happened."

For several days after the crash Mr Cole rejected claims that the driver, Henri Paul, was drunk.

An official autopsy later found that the deputy head of security at the Paris Ritz had substantially more than the legal limit of alcohol in his blood.

Mr Cole also went on television to repeat Mr al Fayed's claims that Diana had spoken a few words at the Paris hospital where she was taken.

Doctors had denied that this would have been possible.



Mr al Fayed, right, counts Mr Cole among his staunchest friends. PHOTOGRAPH BY FIONA HANSON

following the inadvertent leaking of the contents of the Queen's Christmas speech to a tabloid newspaper.

During his time at the BBC, Mr Cole covered conflicts in Northern Ireland, Beirut and South Africa.

He began his reporting life on the Acton Gazette and went on to win two Royal Television Society awards for his coverage of the Brighton

bombing and Cecil Parkinson's resignation.

During his time at Harrods he parried successive, ferocious onslaughts from Tiny Rowland over the ownership of Harrods and steered a skillful course through the revelations which brought down the Tory MPs Jonathan Aitken and Neil Hamilton.

Mr Cole is married with a wife and daughter.

Charlotte Denny

ONE hundred and fifty years ago the victims were boys climbing chimneys for a living or rag trade workers in the sweatshops of London's East End. Today, the victims of industrial pyramids are the 200,000 call centre workers who answer phone inquiries 24 hours a day, claims a report published today.

Staff work in an Orwellian world where a computer watches every move, say two academics from the London School of Economics, in a report for the Government-funded independent research group, the Centre for Economic Performance.

Call centres are Britain's boom industry, employing 1.1 per cent of the workforce — more than the combined staff of the coal, steel and car making industries.

But, insurance companies, stores and airlines are amongst the firms relocating sales and help-desk staff at the centres. Most are on greenfield sites in the North, where labour is cheaper and the workforce has regional accents which studies show, are trusted by the public.

Sue Fernie and Professor David Metcalf, of the LSE, say that call centres are the factories of the future and their workforce the most closely supervised ever.

"The tyranny of the assembly line is but a Sunday school picnic compared to the control that management can exercise in the call centre telephony," said Ms Fernie. The advertising for one popular call centre software package is headed "Total Control Made Easy."

In most centres, says Ms Fernie, the operator has no control over whether or not to answer a call and as soon as one is over another is put through. The technology enables managers to monitor every aspect of an operator's performance, from listening in to check they are adopting the correct cheery tone.

The researchers cite one London-based firm which uses a call centre to collect parking and clamping fines via credit card. Calls must be answered within 15 seconds, logged and the caller persuaded to part with a credit card number in less than three minutes.

But the picture of battery farm-style telephone barns is made palatable by good rates of pay, while employees seem to become quickly acclimatised to high levels of monitoring, says Ms Fernie.

Trimble and Adams angry over Sinn Fein bar

continued from page 1

resolving conflict. Everyone has a responsibility to act and slide back into conflict and to ensure that the opportunity for peace, undermined by this decision, is built upon and not wasted."

Mr Adams said he had abandoned plans to visit the US next week. They had been cancelled, he said, because he had been denied a visa while Sinn Fein was out of the talks.

Mr Adams repeated yesterday that Dr Mowlam had failed to prove his case. There was no evidence to prove IRA involvement in the murders, nor was Sinn Fein the representative of the IRA.

The murders last week of Catholic drugs dealer Brendan Campbell and Ulster Defence Association leader Bobby Doogan prompted the crisis, Mr Campbell was killed by a weapon used in a previous shooting by Direct Action Against Drugs, an IRA front organisation. Three west Belfast men, remanded in an IRA H-Block at the Maze, have been charged with Mr Doogan's murder.

Security sources are uncertain whether the IRA ceasefire can hold. It is likely that the governments will turn a blind eye to punishment beatings. But any forensic evidence of IRA involvement in the murder of Catholic Kevin Conway, a 30-year-old petty criminal, in Agahlee, Co Antrim, on Wednesday, would spell Sinn Fein's permanent disqualification. Dr Mowlam said there was none.

will be able to return on March 9."

Contacts would be maintained throughout, said. The Government had indicted Sinn Fein at Dublin Castle on Monday under the rules for "demonstrably dishonouring" the Mitchell principles. Its case was based on Mr Flanagan's assessment and the belief that Sinn Fein and the IRA are inextricably linked.

Mr Adams repeated yesterday that Dr Mowlam had failed to prove his case. There was no evidence to prove IRA involvement in the murders, nor was Sinn Fein the representative of the IRA.

The murders last week of Catholic drugs dealer Brendan Campbell and Ulster Defence Association leader Bobby Doogan prompted the crisis, Mr Campbell was killed by a weapon used in a previous shooting by Direct Action Against Drugs, an IRA front organisation. Three west Belfast men, remanded in an IRA H-Block at the Maze, have been charged with Mr Doogan's murder.

Security sources are uncertain whether the IRA ceasefire can hold. It is likely that the governments will turn a blind eye to punishment beatings. But any forensic evidence of IRA involvement in the murder of Catholic Kevin Conway, a 30-year-old petty criminal, in Agahlee, Co Antrim, on Wednesday, would spell Sinn Fein's permanent disqualification. Dr Mowlam said there was none.

Bobby Doogan prompted the crisis, Mr Campbell was killed by a weapon used in a previous shooting by Direct Action Against Drugs, an IRA front organisation. Three west Belfast men, remanded in an IRA H-Block at the Maze, have been charged with Mr Doogan's murder.

Security sources are uncertain whether the IRA ceasefire can hold. It is likely that the governments will turn a blind eye to punishment beatings. But any forensic evidence of IRA involvement in the murder of Catholic Kevin Conway, a 30-year-old petty criminal, in Agahlee, Co Antrim, on Wednesday, would spell Sinn Fein's permanent disqualification. Dr Mowlam said there was none.

The murders last week of Catholic drugs dealer Brendan Campbell and Ulster Defence Association leader Bobby Doogan prompted the crisis, Mr Campbell was killed by a weapon used in a previous shooting by Direct Action Against Drugs, an IRA front organisation. Three west Belfast men, remanded in an IRA H-Block at the Maze, have been charged with Mr Doogan's murder.

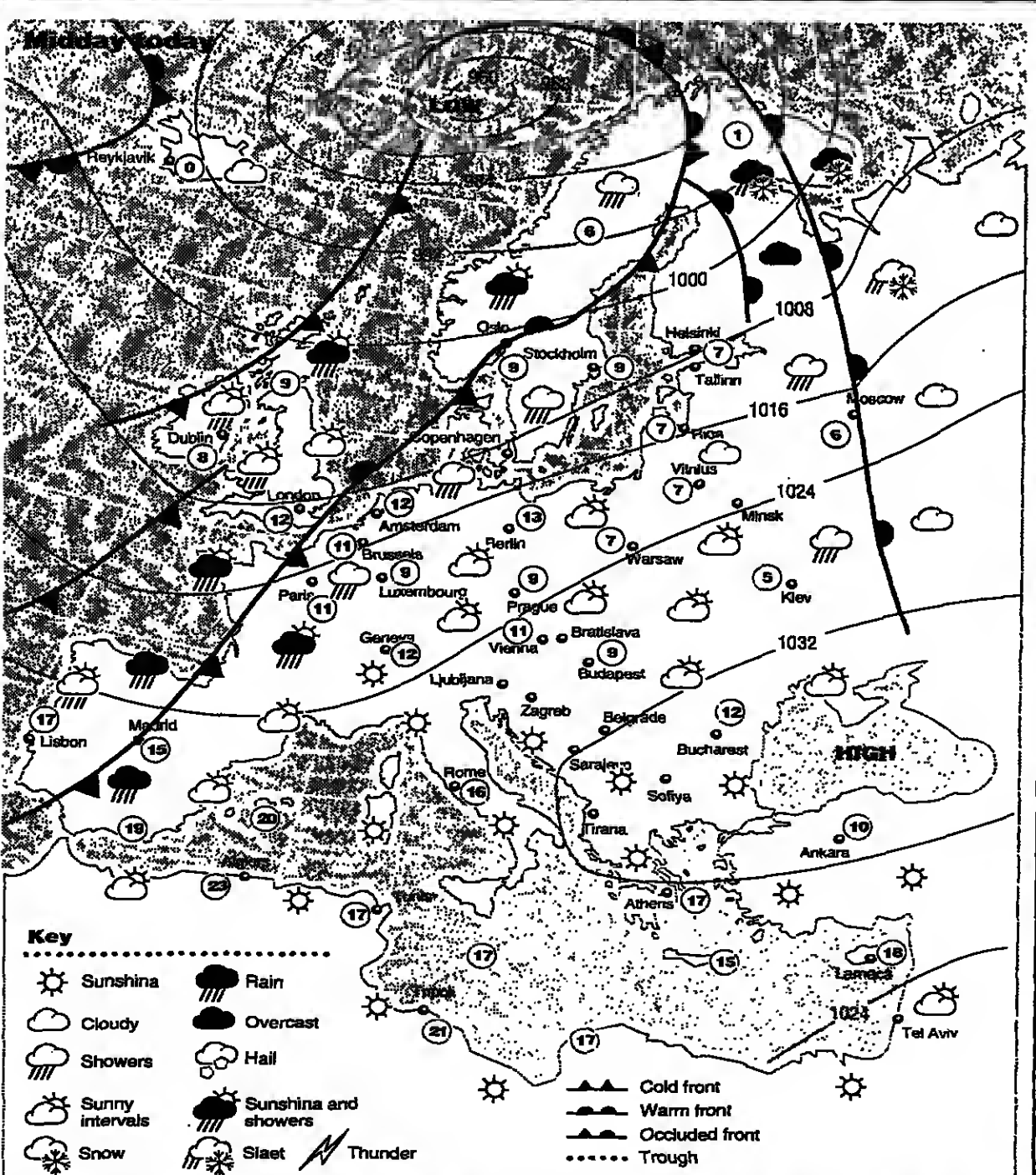
Security sources are uncertain whether the IRA ceasefire can hold. It is likely that the governments will turn a blind eye to punishment beatings. But any forensic evidence of IRA involvement in the murder of Catholic Kevin Conway, a 30-year-old petty criminal, in Agahlee, Co Antrim, on Wednesday, would spell Sinn Fein's permanent disqualification. Dr Mowlam said there was none.

The murders last week of Catholic drugs dealer Brendan Campbell and Ulster Defence Association leader Bobby Doogan prompted the crisis, Mr Campbell was killed by a weapon used in a previous shooting by Direct Action Against Drugs, an IRA front organisation. Three west Belfast men, remanded in an IRA H-Block at the Maze, have been charged with Mr Doogan's murder.

Security sources are uncertain whether the IRA ceasefire can hold. It is likely that the governments will turn a blind eye to punishment beatings. But any forensic evidence of IRA involvement in the murder of Catholic Kevin Conway, a 30-year-old petty criminal, in Agahlee, Co Antrim, on Wednesday, would spell Sinn Fein's permanent disqualification. Dr Mowlam said there was none.

Dr Mowlam said there was none.

The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities

City	Today	Tomorrow
Algeria	12-18 S	13-19 S
Amsterdam	12-18 S	13-19 S
Antwerp	12-18 S	13-19 S
Berlin	12-18 S	13-19 S
Bombay	12-18 S	13-19 S
Buenos Aires	12-18 S	13-19 S
Cardiff	12-18 S	13-19 S
Cairo	12-18 S	13-19 S
Canberra	12-18 S	13-19 S
Cape Town	12-18 S	13-19 S
Chennai	12-18 S	13-19 S
Copenhagen	12-18 S	13-19 S
Dublin	12-18 S	13-19 S
Edinburgh	12-18 S	13-19 S
Geneva	12-18 S	13-19 S
Helsinki	12-18 S	13-19 S
London	12-18 S	13-19 S
Los Angeles	12-18 S	13-19 S
Madrid	12-18 S	13-19 S
Moscow	12-18 S	13-19 S
Mumbai	12-18 S	13-19 S
Nairobi	12-18 S	13-19 S
Paris	12-18 S	13-19 S
Rangoon	12-18 S	13-19 S
Rome	12-18 S	13-19 S
Sydney	12-18 S	13-19 S
Tokyo	12-18 S	13-19 S
Yokohama	12-18 S	13-19 S

Around the world

City	Today	Tomorrow
Algeria	12-18 S	13-19 S
Amsterdam	12-18 S	13-19 S
Antwerp	12-18 S	13-19 S
Berlin	12-18 S	13-19 S
Bombay	12-18 S	13-19 S
Buenos Aires	12-18 S	13-19 S
Cardiff	12-18 S	13-19 S
Cairo	12-18 S	13-19 S
Canberra	12-18 S	13-19 S
Cape Town	12-18 S	13-19 S
Chennai	12-18 S	13-19 S
Copenhagen	12-18 S	13-19 S
Dublin	12-18 S	13-19 S
Edinburgh	12-18 S	13-19 S
Geneva	12-18 S	13-19 S
Helsinki	12-18 S	13-19 S
London	12-18 S	13-19 S
Los Angeles	12-18 S	13-19 S
Madrid	12-18 S	13-19 S
Moscow	12-18 S	13-19 S
Mumbai	12-18 S	13-19 S
Nairobi	12-18 S	13-19 S
Paris	12-18 S	13-19 S
Rangoon	12-18 S	13-19 S
Rome	12-18 S	13-19 S
Sydney	12-18 S	13-19 S
Tokyo	12-18 S	13-19 S
Yokohama	12-18 S	13-19 S

European weather outlook

Country	Today	Tomorrow
Algeria	12-18 S	13-19 S
Amsterdam	12-18 S	13-19 S
Antwerp	12-18 S	13-19 S
Berlin	12-18 S	13-19 S
Bombay	12-18 S	13-19 S
Buenos Aires	12-18 S	13-19 S
Cardiff	12-18 S	13-19 S
Cairo	12-18 S	13-19 S
Canberra	12-18 S	13-19 S
Cape Town	12-18 S	13-19 S
Chennai	12-18 S	13-19 S
Copenhagen	12-18 S	13-19 S
Dublin	12-18 S	13-19 S
Edinburgh	12-18 S	13-19 S
Geneva	12-18 S	13-19 S
Helsinki	12-18 S	13-19 S
London	12-18 S	13-19 S
Los Angeles	12-18 S	13-19 S
Madrid	12-18 S	13-19 S
Moscow	12-18 S	13-19 S
Mumbai	12-18 S	13-19 S
Nairobi	12-18 S	13-19 S
Paris	12-18 S	13-19 S
Rangoon	12-18 S	13-19 S
Rome	12-18 S	13-19 S
Sydney	12-18 S	13-19 S
Tokyo	12-18 S	13-19 S
Yokohama	12-18 S	13-19 S

Television and radio — Saturday

Channel	Time	Programme
BBC 1	7.45am	Curling, 11.45am Live and Kicking, 1.15pm Weather, 1.30pm Grandstand, 1.55pm News and Weather, 6.55pm Regional News and Sport, 8.30pm The Big Match, 8.50pm The Big Match, 9.10pm The Big Match, 9.30pm The Big Match, 9.50pm The Big Match, 10.10pm The Big Match, 10.30pm The Big Match, 10.50pm The Big Match, 11.10pm The Big Match, 11.30pm The Big Match, 11.50pm The Big Match, 12.10pm The Big Match, 12.30pm The Big Match, 12.50pm The Big Match, 1.10pm The Big Match, 1.30pm The Big Match, 1.50pm The Big Match, 2.10pm The Big Match, 2.30pm The Big Match, 2.50pm The Big Match, 3.10pm The Big Match, 3.30pm The Big Match, 3.50pm The Big Match, 4.10pm The Big Match, 4.30pm The Big Match, 4.50pm The Big Match, 5.10pm The Big Match, 5.30pm The Big Match, 5.50pm The Big Match, 6.10pm The Big Match, 6.30pm The Big Match, 6.50pm The Big Match, 7.10pm The Big Match, 7.30pm The Big Match, 7.50pm The Big Match, 8.10pm The Big Match, 8.30pm The Big Match, 8.50pm The Big Match, 9.10pm The Big Match, 9.30pm The Big Match, 9.50pm The Big Match, 10.10pm The Big Match, 10.30pm The Big Match, 10.50pm The Big Match, 11.10pm The Big Match, 11.30pm The Big Match, 11.50pm The Big Match, 12.10pm The Big Match, 12.30pm The Big Match, 12.50pm The Big Match, 1.10pm The Big Match, 1.30pm The Big Match, 1.50pm The Big Match, 2.10pm The Big Match, 2.30pm The Big Match, 2.50pm The Big Match, 3.10pm The Big Match, 3.30pm The Big Match, 3.50pm The Big Match, 4.10pm The Big Match, 4.30pm The Big Match, 4.50pm The Big Match, 5.10pm The Big Match, 5.30pm The Big Match, 5.50pm The Big Match, 6.10pm The Big Match, 6.30pm The Big Match, 6.50pm The Big Match, 7.10pm The Big Match, 7.30pm The Big Match, 7.50pm The Big Match, 8.10pm The Big Match, 8.30pm The Big Match, 8.50pm The Big Match, 9.10pm The Big Match, 9.30pm The Big Match, 9.50pm The Big Match, 10.10pm The Big Match, 10.30pm The Big Match, 10.50pm The Big Match, 11.10pm The Big Match, 11.30pm The Big Match, 11.50pm The Big Match, 12.10pm The Big Match, 12.30pm The Big Match, 12.50pm The Big Match, 1.10pm The Big Match, 1.30pm The Big Match, 1.50pm The Big Match, 2.10pm The Big Match, 2.30pm The Big Match, 2.50pm The Big Match, 3.10pm The Big Match, 3.30pm The Big Match, 3.50pm The Big Match, 4.10pm The Big Match, 4.30pm The Big Match, 4.50pm The Big Match, 5.10pm The Big Match, 5.30pm The Big Match, 5.50pm The Big Match, 6.10pm The Big Match, 6.30pm The Big Match, 6.50pm The Big Match, 7.10pm The Big Match, 7.30pm The Big Match, 7.50pm The Big Match, 8.10pm The Big Match, 8.30pm The Big Match, 8.50pm The Big Match, 9.10pm The Big Match, 9.30pm The Big Match, 9.50pm The Big Match, 10.10pm The Big Match, 10.30pm The Big Match, 10.50pm The Big Match, 11.10pm The Big Match, 11.30pm The Big Match, 11.50pm The Big Match, 12.10pm The Big Match, 12.30pm The Big Match, 12.50pm The Big Match, 1.10pm The Big Match, 1.30pm The Big Match, 1.50pm The Big Match, 2.10pm The Big Match, 2.30pm The Big Match, 2.50pm The Big Match, 3.10pm The Big Match, 3.30pm The Big Match, 3.50pm The Big Match, 4.10pm The Big Match, 4.30pm The Big Match, 4.50pm The Big Match, 5.10pm The Big Match, 5.30pm The Big Match, 5.50pm The Big Match, 6.10pm The Big Match, 6.30pm The Big Match, 6.50pm The Big Match, 7.10pm The Big Match, 7.30pm The Big Match, 7.50pm The Big Match, 8.10pm The Big Match, 8.30pm The Big Match, 8.50pm The Big Match, 9.10pm The Big Match, 9.30pm The Big Match, 9.50pm The Big Match, 10.10pm The Big Match, 10.30pm The Big Match, 10.50pm The Big Match, 11.10pm The Big Match, 11.30pm The Big Match, 11.50pm The Big Match, 12.10pm The Big Match, 12.30pm The Big Match, 12.50pm The Big Match, 1.10pm The Big Match, 1.30pm The Big Match, 1.50pm The Big Match, 2.10pm The Big Match, 2.30pm The Big Match, 2.50pm The Big Match, 3.10pm The Big Match, 3.30pm The Big Match, 3.50pm The Big Match, 4.10pm The Big Match, 4.30pm The Big Match, 4.50pm The Big Match, 5.10pm The Big Match, 5.30pm The Big Match, 5.50pm The Big Match, 6.10pm The Big Match, 6.30pm The Big Match, 6.50pm The Big Match, 7.10pm The Big Match, 7.30pm The Big Match, 7.50pm The Big Match, 8.10pm The Big Match, 8.30pm The Big Match, 8.50pm The Big Match, 9.10pm The Big Match, 9.30pm The Big Match, 9.50pm The Big Match, 10.10pm The Big Match, 10.30pm The Big Match, 10.50pm The Big Match, 11.10pm The Big Match, 11.30pm The Big Match, 11.50pm The Big Match, 12.10pm The Big Match, 12.30pm The Big Match, 12.50pm The Big Match, 1.10pm The Big Match, 1.30pm The Big Match, 1.50pm The Big Match, 2.10pm The Big Match, 2.30pm The Big Match, 2.50pm The Big Match, 3.10pm The Big Match, 3.30pm The Big Match, 3.50pm The Big Match, 4.10pm The Big Match, 4.30pm The Big Match, 4.50pm The Big Match, 5.10pm The Big Match, 5.30pm The Big Match, 5.50pm The Big Match, 6.10pm The Big Match, 6.30pm The Big Match, 6.50pm The Big Match, 7.10pm The Big Match, 7.30pm The Big Match, 7.50pm The Big Match, 8.10pm The Big Match, 8.30pm The Big Match, 8.50pm The Big Match, 9.10pm The Big Match, 9.30pm The Big Match, 9.50pm The Big Match, 10.10pm The Big Match, 10.30pm The Big Match, 10.50pm The Big Match, 11.10pm The Big Match, 11.30pm The Big Match, 11.50pm The Big Match, 12.10pm The Big Match, 12.30pm The Big Match, 12.50pm The Big Match, 1.10pm The Big Match, 1.30pm The Big Match, 1.50pm The Big Match, 2.10pm The Big Match, 2.30pm The Big Match, 2.50pm The Big Match, 3.10pm The Big Match, 3.30pm The Big Match, 3.50pm The Big Match, 4.10pm The Big Match, 4.30pm The Big Match, 4.50pm The Big Match, 5.10pm The Big Match, 5.30pm The Big Match, 5.50pm The Big Match, 6.10pm The Big Match, 6.30pm The Big Match, 6.50pm The Big Match, 7.10pm The Big Match, 7.30pm The Big Match, 7.50pm The Big Match, 8.10pm The Big Match, 8.30pm The Big Match, 8.50pm The Big Match, 9.10pm The Big Match, 9.30pm The Big Match, 9.50pm The Big Match, 10.10pm The Big Match, 10.30pm The Big Match, 10.50pm The Big Match, 11.10pm The Big Match, 11.30pm The Big Match, 11.50pm The Big Match, 12.10pm The Big Match, 12.30pm The Big Match, 12.50pm The Big Match, 1.10pm The Big Match, 1.30pm The Big Match, 1.50pm The Big Match, 2.10pm The Big Match, 2.30pm The Big Match, 2.50pm The Big Match, 3.10pm The Big Match, 3.30pm The Big Match, 3.50pm The Big Match, 4.10pm The Big Match, 4.30pm The Big Match, 4.50pm The Big Match, 5.10pm The Big Match, 5.30pm The Big Match, 5.50pm The Big Match, 6.10pm The Big Match, 6.30pm The Big Match, 6.50pm The Big Match, 7.10pm The Big Match, 7.30pm The Big Match, 7.50pm The Big Match, 8.10pm The Big Match, 8.30pm The Big Match, 8.50pm The Big Match, 9.10pm The Big Match, 9.30pm The Big Match, 9.50pm The Big Match, 10.10pm The Big Match, 10.30pm The Big Match, 10.50pm The Big Match, 11.10pm The Big Match, 11.30pm The Big Match, 11.50pm The Big Match, 12.10pm The Big Match, 12.30pm The Big Match, 12.50pm The Big Match, 1.10pm The Big Match, 1.30pm The Big Match, 1.50pm The Big Match, 2.10pm The Big Match, 2.30pm The Big Match, 2.50pm The Big Match, 3.10pm The Big Match, 3.30pm The Big Match, 3.50pm The Big Match, 4.10pm The Big Match, 4.30pm The Big Match, 4.50pm The Big Match, 5.10pm The Big Match, 5.30pm The Big Match, 5.50pm The Big Match, 6.10pm The Big Match, 6.30pm The Big Match, 6.50pm The Big Match, 7.10pm The Big Match, 7.30pm The Big Match, 7.50pm The Big Match, 8.10pm The Big Match, 8.30pm The Big Match, 8.50pm The Big Match, 9.10pm The Big Match, 9.30pm The Big Match, 9.50pm The Big Match, 10.10pm The Big Match, 10.30pm The Big Match, 10.50pm The Big Match, 11.10pm The Big Match, 11.30pm The Big Match, 11.50pm The Big Match, 12.10pm The Big Match, 12.30pm The Big Match, 12.50pm The Big Match, 1.10pm The Big Match, 1.30pm The Big Match, 1.50pm The Big Match, 2.10pm The Big Match, 2.30pm The Big Match, 2.50pm The Big Match, 3.10pm The Big Match, 3.30pm The Big Match, 3.50pm The Big Match, 4.10pm The Big Match, 4.30pm The Big Match, 4.50pm The Big Match, 5.10pm The Big Match, 5.30pm The Big Match, 5.50pm The Big Match, 6.10pm The Big Match, 6.30pm The Big Match, 6.50pm The Big Match, 7.10pm The Big Match, 7.30pm The Big Match, 7.50pm The Big Match, 8.10pm The Big Match, 8.30pm The Big Match, 8.50pm The Big Match, 9.10pm The Big Match, 9.30pm The Big Match, 9.50pm The Big Match, 10.10pm The Big Match, 10.30pm The Big Match, 10.50pm The Big Match, 11.10pm The Big Match, 11.30pm The Big Match, 11.50pm The Big Match, 12.10pm The Big Match, 12.30pm The Big Match, 12.50pm The Big Match, 1.10pm The Big Match, 1.30pm The Big Match, 1.50pm The Big Match, 2.10pm The Big Match, 2.30pm The Big Match, 2.50pm The Big Match, 3.10pm The Big Match, 3.30pm The Big Match, 3.50pm The Big Match, 4.10pm The Big Match, 4.30pm The Big Match, 4.50pm The Big Match, 5.10pm The Big Match, 5.30pm The Big Match, 5.50pm The Big Match, 6.10pm The Big Match, 6.30pm The Big Match, 6.50pm The Big Match, 7.10pm The Big Match, 7.30pm The Big Match, 7.50pm The Big Match, 8.10pm The Big Match, 8.30pm The Big Match, 8.50pm The Big Match, 9.10pm The Big Match, 9.30pm The Big Match, 9.50pm The Big Match, 10.10pm The Big Match, 10.30pm The Big Match, 10.50pm The Big Match, 11.10pm The Big Match, 11.30pm The Big Match, 11.50pm The Big Match, 12.10pm The Big Match, 12.30pm The Big Match, 12.50pm The Big Match, 1.10pm The Big Match, 1.30pm The Big Match, 1.50pm The Big Match, 2.10pm The Big Match, 2.30pm The Big Match, 2.50pm The Big Match, 3.10pm The Big Match, 3.30pm The Big Match, 3.50pm The Big Match, 4.10pm The Big Match, 4.30pm The Big Match, 4.50pm The Big Match, 5.10pm The Big Match, 5.30pm

World of
e workers

Irvine denies guilt in hanging offence

Michael White on a row over works of art 'looted' from galleries

LORD Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, last night defended his acquisition of 87 works of art from the National Gallery of Scotland — and many more on loan from three other British galleries — to grace his refurbished official residence in the Palace of Westminster.

As the latest outcry raged around the £650,000 renovation, Conservatives and Liberal Democrats joined Scottish Nationalist accusations of "looting" the national archives by Tony Blair's legal mentor and political confidant.

Only Downing Street and the galleries involved defended the embattled Lord Chancellor — though ministerial colleagues who admire his brains and energy admit that the street-smart instincts he is missing, "Derry lacks guile," conceded one.

Lord "Derry" Irvine insists he has done nothing wrong. "This is not looting, this is independent trustees deciding they want to make these loans," he said during a working visit to Northern Ireland yesterday.

He told the Guardian last night that all the works in-

cluded had been in storage in the galleries. They would now be on view again — albeit by appointment — to connoisseurs, fund-raising charities and members of the public.

"Every loan is from the reserve collection, from the cellars, not the walls. When I looked around the National Gallery of Scotland we went around the cellars. And the paintings that are coming to us are coming from the cellars," he said.

The Irvines are well-known enthusiasts, who claim to know most big British museums and galleries well. In seeking loans from Edinburgh and also from three in London — the Royal Academy, the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich and the Imperial War Museum — they had targeted institutions known to have large reserve collections in their inspection during last summer's holidays.

"It is good that paintings which have been in the cellars, which they don't have the space to hang, and are first class paintings, should be shown in places where the public has access," he said.

But, after nine months in office in which he has become the Government's prime tar-

get for Fleet Street's "gaffe-watchers", that defence is unlikely to appease his critics.

Alex Salmond, the leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP), said: "Derry Irvine is displaying a breathtaking arrogance which is entirely in character. His looting and pilaging of Scottish art works will cause great anger both in the artistic and academic worlds."

"There are plenty of public buildings in Scotland which could house these items and thereby ensure genuine public access. Taking them down to Derry Irvine's house in London is nothing to do with access but everything to do with self-aggrandisement."

The chief executive of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, Willie Rennie, protested: "These paintings are for people to see. Unless the Lord Chancellor can stretch his large expenses budget to free flights to his London palace for people in Scotland then he should return the paintings. Tony Blair's new slogan should be — For the Few, Not the Many."

Both the Royal Academy and the National Gallery of Scotland's director, Timothy Clifford, defended the decisions as standard practice. "I

don't think we have ever refused any government body before. We tend to the Secretary of State in Scotland at Bute House and Dover House and to the Prime Minister. It's standard practice," he said.

Lord Irvine last night listed a series of groups already booked to see the paintings, including the National Art Collection Fund and the Victorian Society.

But charities are also booking guided tours as a fund-raising device. They include Womenkind Worldwide, the Leonard Cheshire Foundation and the Disability Law Fellowship. "They're queuing up," he said last night.

What they will see ranges from Albacini plaster busts to important Scots painters, two McTaggart's, a Geddes and a Boudin. The sculptor, Gibson — "the English Canova" — will be on view, plus Landseer's portrait of Gibson.

The Prime Minister feels his Lord Chancellor has been unfairly picked on by the media, but knows he has made mistakes too. Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, has repeatedly clashed with Lord Irvine on policy issues — and emerged the political winner, increasingly a Blair trustee.

"Derry is like Tony Banks and Clare Short, they're too honest and do not immediately think of the political consequences," another cabinet minister said yesterday. "The difference is, I suspect, that Tony and Clare are capable of thinking through those consequences. Derry has never been a politician. But he's a very effective chairman of cabinet committees and certainly cuts through the waffle very effectively."

Faced with reporters' questions, the latest in a running battle over the cost of Lord Irvine's official residence, Downing Street's junior spokesman insisted that press coverage of Lord Irvine's activities had

been consistently unfair.

When William Hague tormented Mr Blair over the threat of "backdoor" privacy legislation in the Commons this week he could not resist joking that Lord Irvine could easily have sorted it out "if he were not so busy flicking through furniture catalogues."

That was a reference to the latest details of the now-famous refurbishment which will allow the Irvines to move into their official residence from Mondays to Fridays after Easter.

Two £3,000 Gothic beds caught the attention of tabloids and broadsheets alike, though Lord Irvine's allies insist that the details were agreed by an all-party Lords

committee with a Tory majority.

They are part of a programme to restore Sir Charles Barry's long-neglected 1847 masterpiece and its sumptuous interior designs by Auguste Pugin. Lord Irvine plainly thinks the committee's role puts the matter above party politics. Tories are unimpressed and mischievously point to the austere habits of their last Lord Chancellor, also a Scot, Lord Mackay.

The greatest danger for the Government is that its Lord Chancellor is turned into what the Tories are calling "a national joke" — the butt of stand-up comedians on Friday night TV.

There may be talk of replacing Lord Irvine if he does not raise his game. The names of several lawyer peers are being half-heartedly touted. But no one doubts Mr Blair's affection and loyalty — and his dependence for advice from an utterly trustworthy intimate. Derry Irvine will have to start stealing pictures from galleries before his friend, Tony, feels his collar.

Bruised but unhowled the Lord Chancellor suggested he would not have done things differently except to lay the whole refurbishment programme out into the public domain from the start. But he conceded: "I have certainly lost my innocence, if I had any."



Embattled Lord Irvine... ministerial colleagues admit that his street-smart instincts are missing as outcry rages over his 'looting' of national archives

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID SILLITOE

Gaffes that drew critics' fire



Cardinal Wolsey: An after-dinner joke



Detail from Wilkie's Josephine and the Fortune Teller

- Shopping list**
- Eight paintings including William McTaggart's *Harvest* at Broomieknowe and his *Autumn Evening* at Broomieknowe, Sir David Wilkie's *Josephine and the Fortune-teller*, and Boudin's *Venice: View from the Giudecca*
 - Nineteen plaster busts by Albacini including Socrates, Aphrodite and Eros
 - Ten 18th century prints by Piranesi, from the *Carceri* series
 - Fifty 18th and 19th century prints, mostly after Wilkie and Sir Henry Raeburn

May 1997: Finally appointed by his former pupil, Tony Blair, to be Lord Chancellor, after being shadow lord chancellor under Neil Kinnock and John Smith.

July 1997: Attacks £1 million a year legal "fat cats" to the surprise of lawyers who knew him as a £500,000 a year QC himself.

September 1997: Accepts a modest ministerial pay rise of £1,800, when other ministers forgo theirs, because he is legally required to. Salary rises to £140,665.

October 1997: Unveils ambitious package of reforms to cap runaway legal aid bill, only to face charges that he is hitting the poorest.

November 1997: Details start to emerge of the cost of refurbishing Lord Chancellor's historic residence in the Palace of Westminster, eventually totalling £650,000. Wall paper bill: £29,211.

December 1997: Likened himself to Henry VIII's mighty adviser, Cardinal Wolsey for the network of cabinet committees he chairs. Explains it was an after-dinner joke.

December 1997: Admits giving wrong advice that Press

Complaints Commission would not be affected by privacy element of European Convention on Human Rights.

January 1998: Tabloids report he took Lady Irvine on parliamentary jaunt to the Caribbean at taxpayers' expense. Denies breaking the rules.

February 1998: Gives impression in New Statesman interview that he favours

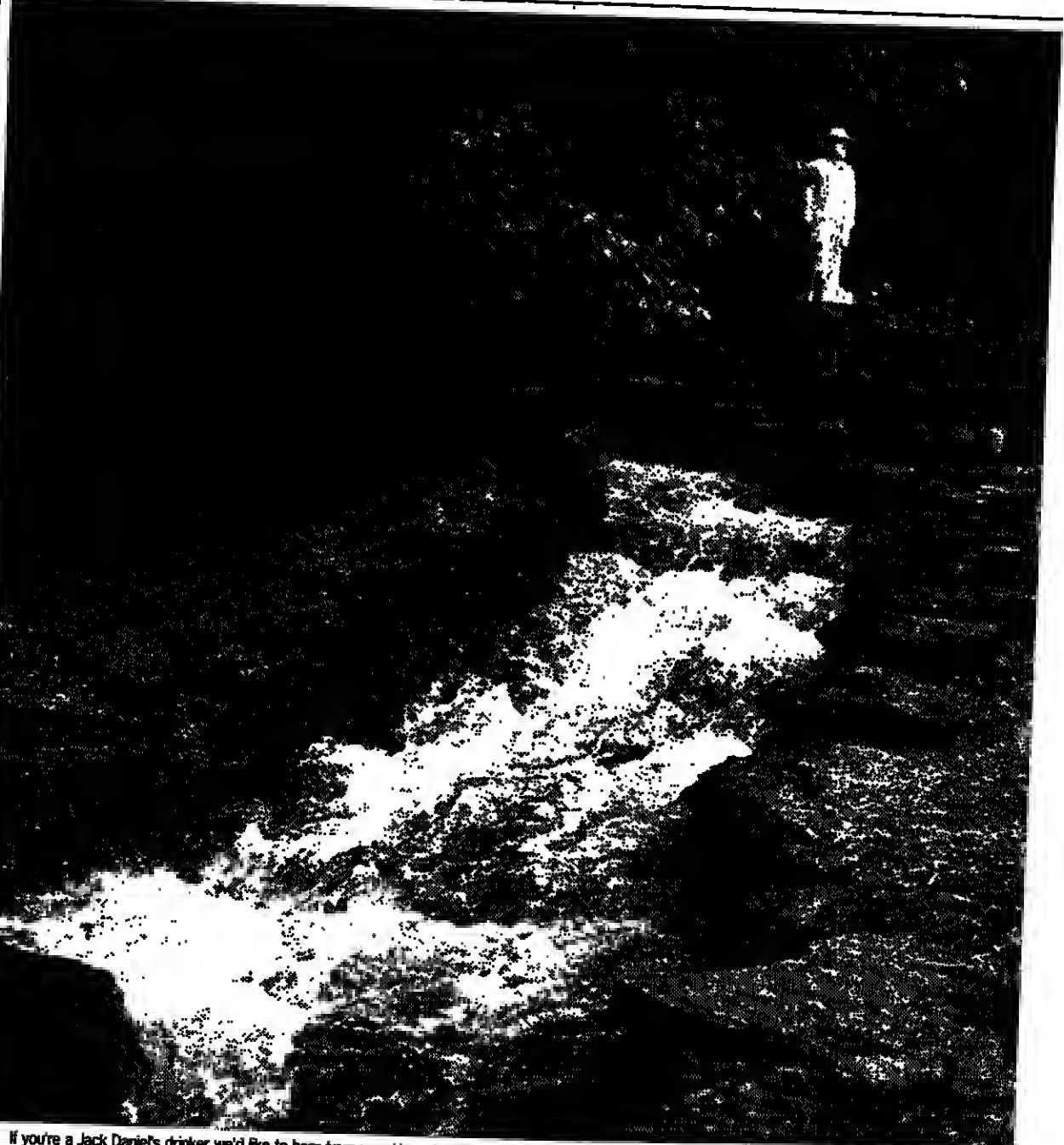
"prior restraint" of press and privacy laws designed to protect love life of public figures such as Robin Cook.

February 1998: Senior woman solicitor, Jane Carter, files sex discrimination case against the Lord Chancellor's department.

February 1998: Further details of £3,000 beds for refurbished residence emerge, culminating in reports of "looting" of art galleries.

It isn't long, then, before he acts out his own notion of the interview as confession, and enters into a discussion of his own weaknesses.
Sabine Durrant meets David Lodge

The Week page 15



A SPRING THAT NEVER RUNS OUT, according to folks at Jack Daniel Distillery, is a pretty darn good spring.

Mr. Jack Daniel built our distillery in the Hollow back in 1866 because this is where he found our limestone cave spring. It flows from deep underground, and it's free of iron. This water (and our time-honored charcoal mellowing process) account largely for the rareness of Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey. After a sip, we believe, you'll understand why we regard both so highly.



JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

ملک و ممالک

Moment of truth dawns for Saddam

Talks

Julian Borger in Baghdad

THE United Nations secretary-general, Kofi Annan, arrived in Baghdad yesterday for crisis talks with Saddam Hussein's government as Iraq approached what one of Mr Annan's aides described as the "moment of truth".

An Iraqi government official said Iraq was willing to hold serious and substantive talks over the issue of weapons inspections. But members of Mr Annan's advance party said it was far

from clear whether these would go far enough to satisfy the UN Security Council, to which the secretary-general will report early next week. A UN official described the situation on the eve of talks as poised 50-50 between peace and war. He said: "No one of us here on Saturday or Sunday — whether the crisis will be over or if the bombing [will be] about to begin. It's the moment of truth."

After his aircraft touched down at Saddam International Airport yesterday evening, Mr Annan was moderately hopeful about the prospects of a deal. "I am reasonably optimistic that we will find a peaceful solution. I hope I will leave Baghdad

UN to vote on doubling oil-for-food sales

IRAQ could more than double the amount of oil it sells to buy food and medicine for its people under a resolution approved yesterday by the United Nations Security Council, Britain's ambassador to the UN, John Weston, said.

The council agreed to increase from \$2.1 billion (£1.4 billion) to \$4.2 billion the amount of oil Iraq can sell every six months under the UN oil-for-food plan. Sales can begin only after Iraq submits a distribution plan to the UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, who

must then approve it. But Iraq's deputy ambassador, Saïd Hasan, said Baghdad could not pump that much oil. "The distribution plan will reflect the real quantity that Iraq can export, which is \$4 billion," Mr Hasan said.

The Security Council was due to vote on the oil-for-food plan yesterday. Diplomats said the timing of the vote was intended to boost Mr Annan's chances of negotiating a peaceful end to the standoff over UN weapons inspections on his mission to Baghdad. — AP.

with a package that will be acceptable to all," he said. Iraq's deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, who met Mr Annan, said: "We are going to enter into constructive discussions about the current situation and I share the opti-

mism of the secretary-general about the outcome. Iraq wants a balanced and fair solution... that preserves the sovereignty, dignity and national security of Iraq, as well as the implementation of UN resolutions."

Diplomatic sources in Baghdad said an increasingly likely scenario was that Mr Annan would leave with an Iraqi undertaking to open presidential palace compounds under certain circumstances. This might go far

enough to satisfy some Security Council members, like China, Russia and France, but not the United States. In that case Britain could play a crucial role in the decision on whether to pursue air strikes. An adviser to Mr An-

nan said the British and US positions were beginning to fall out of step. "If there is no agreement, Washington will be ready to take military action without further discussion. They already believe they have enough legal backing for it. But the British want to put through another resolution," he said. Before Mr Annan's arrival, an aide said the secretary-general would convey the Security Council's demand for full compliance with UN resolutions mandating the search for, and destruction of, biological or chemical weapons.

One way out of the crisis thought to be among the secretary-general's proposals might be for UN Special Commission (Unscop) inspectors to be ac-

companied by diplomats when inspecting palace compounds. The proposal is known as "Unscop with white gloves". It is hoped this would bridge the gap between the demand for unfettered access and Iraq's insistence on preserving its dignity and sovereignty. Mr Annan was due to consult UN officials last night, then meet Mr Aziz this morning, followed by talks between UN and Iraqi delegations. UN officials have been led to believe that after those discussions Mr Annan will meet President Saddam, but that is not been guaranteed.

Leader comment: Letters, page 6; Matthew Engel, page 9; Ian Mayes: Open Door, The Week page 14



The party's over for a Saddam Hussein impersonator at a Tel Aviv nightclub where young Israelis danced away their fears at an 'Anthrax ball' yesterday PHOTOGRAPH BY EYAL WARSHAVSKY

Danse macabre at disco

Israel

David Sharrock in Tel Aviv

IT'S the weekend before "smart bombs" may fall on Baghdad, and Israel's beautiful people are letting it all hang out. At the Kn Club, a former cinema in the south of Tel Aviv, the action is taking place beneath a missile.

It's not a Scud. The club's designer, Yigal Stein, corrects this common mistake by the dancers under the giant model. "It's an El Hussein — that's two Scuds bolted together, the only way Saddam could reach us the last time."

Mr Stein conceived his

"Anthrax party", where the invitation is a reprint of an old German leaflet on how to use your gas mask, after watching Israel's rising tide of panic. "It just came to me two weeks ago when everyone started buying plastic sheeting. We decided we had to do exactly the opposite and get people to queue to party, not to get gas masks."

"People die here every day. I live on Dizengov [Tel Aviv's main boulevard], where buses and busy cafes blow up right in front of your face. Really, I think it's better to celebrate."

Apart from the El Hussein there's a hologram of a swivelling skull and regular blasts of dry ice, mingling with the sweet aroma of marijuana. The dress

code is skimpy and big boots. Five dancers perched atop the massive loud-speaker stacks pumping out a merciless tattoo of "progressive House" don gas masks and wrap themselves in plastic sheeting. When the sirens sound they fall, feigning death and a huge cheer goes up. Later Saddam Hussein — or a younger, slimmer version — takes to the stage and like his lips as two barely-clothed beauties wriggle their bottoms and breasts in his face. These Israeli heroes — doubtless reserves in the Israel Defence Force — wrest Saddam's gun from him and put it to his head. More cheers.

Linat Cohen and Kerem Levkowitz, Sephardi and Ashkenazi princesses, both aged 22 and from Bat Yam,

appreciate the sentiment. "We're not worried because we have a strong army which we trust," they chime in unison. Both remember the 1991 Gulf war and the 39 conventionally armed El Hussein that fell in and around Tel Aviv. "For months we didn't go to school and we had a lot of miracles here because no one was killed," says Ms Levkowitz, forgetting one person did die. It's 3am and the pavement outside the Kn Club is still crowded with hopefuls. Mr Stein considers it one of his more successful parties. "You only have to look at the faces; does anybody look scared to you? Maybe this craziness is a ritual way of getting rid of our fear."

How Baghdad might hit back

Retaliation

David Fairhall Defence Correspondent

WHEN the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, told MPs this week there was only a "low" risk of retaliation with chemical and biological weapons if Iraq were bombed, he was reflecting the intelligence community's consensus in London and Washington. Saddam Hussein is expected to calculate that such retaliation would bring more destruction on his head. Besides, his missile forces are barely up to the job.

But military commanders like to plan on the basis of enemy capabilities, not intentions — because intentions might change suddenly. Their intelligence assessment does not rule out the possibility that Saddam could pot together a weapons system to unleash deadly anthrax spores on Tel Aviv, or VX nerve gas on allied air bases in the Gulf.

Much of Iraq's extensive chemical and biological (CB) armoury has been uncovered by United Nations inspectors and destroyed — 48 operational missiles, warheads for gas and germ warheads, the Al-Hakam biological weapons

Who's within range?



factory, four tonnes of VX nerve agent. Other items are still unaccounted for — two of the 819 Scud ballistic missiles originally delivered by the Soviet Union, missile components perhaps incorporated in Scud derivatives like the 400-mile range Al-Hussein, 17 tonnes of growth media for biological agents, and key items of chemical weapons production equipment. British intelligence sources

estimate that 10 Al-Hussein-type missiles have probably been secreted (US intelligence suggests 30-40). If they are stored as complete missiles it might take a few days to make them operational. If they are dismantled, it could take weeks. Iraq admits to testing its own Scud missile late last year, with a declared range of no more than 90 miles to comply with UN restrictions.

Iraqi engineers have experimented with many other methods of delivering CB agents — long-range pilotless drones, aircraft spray tanks, bombs and artillery rockets, some of which were used during the Iraq-Iran war. Fortunately, biological agents like anthrax and botulinum toxin are difficult to apply precisely. Jonathan Tucker of the Monterey Institute of International Studies, in California, who visited Iraq in 1995 as a member of a UN inspection team, calculates that a missile carrying biological agents might force the evacuation of a city, and even kill hundreds of people, but would be unlikely to wipe out the entire population.

"It's easy to make the stuff," he said. "It is hard to deliver it." A crude missile warhead smashing into the ground at high speed "would destroy 90 per cent of the biological agent".

Nerve gas, particularly Iraq's VX agent, is easier to deliver. But here, too, the heat and violence of a missile exploding on impact would reduce the effect. At the end of the Gulf war in 1991, American sappers unintentionally blew up a dump of sarin gas munitions in southern Iraq without, apparently, killing anyone as the gas cloud dispersed downwind over US army positions.

Fury at 'Blair's Thatcher touch'

War fever

Richard Norton-Taylor

TAM DALYELL, a strong opponent of military strikes against Iraq, yesterday delivered a bitter attack on the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, accusing him of being infected with a "touch of the Thatcher attitude to war".

In what the Labour MP for Linlithgow described as "the most unpleasant and offensive letter" he had written to any minister of any government in his 36 years as an MP, Mr Dalzell cited Margaret Thatcher's desire for war in April 1982.

He said he expected to have thrown back at him the Government's victory vote of 493 to 21 in Tuesday's Commons debate on Iraq. But he told Mr Blair: "I could see the unease and embarrassment in the faces of so many friends and colleagues, dismayed at what they were being asked to do."

Mr Dalzell said he had a nightmare that the United States and Britain had made up their minds about the crisis, and that whatever the results of the visit to Baghdad by Kofi Annan, the United Nations secretary-general, it

would not be enough. There was a possibility of horrendous pollution over western Asia, caused by attacks on Iraqi chemical and biological warfare plants, he added.

He told Mr Blair: "I doubt if you are prepared to 'go that extra mile' to avoid a catastrophic war. Had you been, you would have sent a minister to Baghdad some time ago. You would have talked seriously to the government of Iraq's 60 million people on Iraq's borders. Neither you nor Robin Cook have found the time to do so. Iran lost 1 million at the hands of Saddam Hussein — but is passionately opposed to Anglo-American military action."

Meanwhile, at a banquet in Texas yesterday Baroness Thatcher lived up to Mr Dalzell's view of her by favouring swift military action against Iraq.

"Sometimes you have to use force to get rid of something that is fundamentally wrong," she said. She said she supported US military threats if President Saddam continued to spurn UN weapons inspectors, and said allowing him to remain in power after the Gulf war had been a mistake. "There was a ceasefire. He never was made to surrender," she said. "He doesn't understand the word honour. He must not be allowed to get away with it."

PRODUCT RECALL

Findus Crispy Pancakes and Crepes

Following the Findus Minced Beef Crispy Pancake Product Recall earlier this week, Findus is now recalling all Findus Crispy Pancakes and Crepes with Best Before End Dates of JUL 99 and AUG 99 as a precautionary measure. This is due to finding small cubic pieces of glass in a second variety of Crispy Pancakes. We emphasise that Findus is taking this precaution in the interests of customer safety.

These Best Before End codes can be found on the front side panel of the pack:

**JUL 99
AUG 99**

Findus wish to reassure our customers that we are treating this incident very seriously and are carrying out detailed investigations into this problem. Findus has requested police involvement in order to satisfactorily resolve this matter.

Customers with any of these packs are advised not to eat the pancakes or crepes but to throw them away. For a full refund, customers are asked to cut out and send any panel containing the above Best Before End dates to the

**Findus Crispy Pancake Recall
P O Box 207
York YO1 1XY**

Customers wanting more information can telephone: **FREEPHONE 0800-262491**

Findus would like to apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.



John Glenn, former astronaut and now US senator, is strapped into a centrifuge by NASA scientists at Brooks Air Force Base in Texas this week to simulate lift-off in the space shuttle. Mr Glenn is due to revisit space later this year. PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE THURLOW

'Bribery used to sterilise women'

Anthony Faola in Lima

MOUNTING evidence that the Peruvian government's family planning programme is employing coercion, misinformation or promises of food to persuade poor women to be sterilised has prompted calls for an official investigation.

The government is accused of using a quota system that offers doctors promotion in exchange for convincing rural women — who are often illiterate and speak only local Indian languages — to be sterilised. Many also claim that, in the rush to meet the alleged quotas, doctors are operating in unsanitary conditions that reportedly have caused at least two deaths.

There are four official inquiries under way, including one by a United States congressional committee into whether US Agency for International Development money was used unwittingly in the campaign. "I don't think there is any question that women in Peru, especially very poor mestizo women, have been misled into having sterilisations, and that, in some cases, they were lied to," said Joseph Rees of the US Congressional subcommittee on international and human rights operations. The Peruvian government, which started the

sterilisation campaign in 1995 and saw the number of participants almost triple to 110,000 in 1997, is trying to reduce the national birth rate — and consequently to increase the gross domestic product, many say.

Officials say they have set "goals", not quotas, and then only for budgetary reasons. The programme's supporters say the vast majority of women have the operation of their own free will and blame the religious right for opposition on theological grounds.

"We want to emphasise that there is no campaign on behalf of the ministry of health to give priority to a single method of family planning," the health minister, Mariano Costa Bauer, told the Peruvian congress last month.

The health ministry is launching its own inquiry, with the help of the World Health Organisation, to see if doctors in the countryside have taken the ministry's goals too seriously. Evidence of a quota system appears in an internal government document outlining "credits" given to public health doctors for the number of women they sterilise annually. It seems these credits counted when deciding if doctors would be promoted or retained for government employment, those close to the investigation say. — *Washington Post*

Mexico piles pressure on Chiapas observers

Phil Gannon in Mexico City

A CRACKDOWN by the Mexican immigration authorities on foreign observers in the southern state of Chiapas has led to accusations of a government campaign of xenophobia and of attempts to cover up the "low-intensity warfare" against pro-Zapatista (EZLN) communities.

In the past 10 days, three United States citizens have been expelled for allegedly violating the terms of their tourist visas. A dozen more foreigners are reported to be at risk of expulsion.

The latest deportee, Tom Hansen, former leader of the Pastors for Peace group, was accused of acting as an observer at peace talks between the government and the Zapatista guerrillas.

Rosario Green, the Mexican foreign minister, and Alejandro Carrillo Castro, immigration director, have denied a campaign against foreigners. Mr Carrillo Castro said the government's opponents were indulging in "fantasies", and that the authorities were merely applying the law.

While most government statements have been cautious, leaders of the ruling PRI and the rightwing opposition party, the PAN, have called for the detention and expulsion of all foreigners engaging in "political activity". The PRI's senior spokesman on international affairs,

Alfredo Phillips, said there were foreign interests at work in Chiapas that sought to "internationalise the conflict". A PRI senator, Alvaro Vallarta, said the government should continue to apply the law to all foreigners who "subvert the legal order and incite the

A dozen more foreigners are reported to be at risk of expulsion

indigenous people of Chiapas to rebellion". No real evidence has been provided so far that foreign agitators are doing this.

Suspicion that the authorities are whipping up resentment against foreigners was heightened last weekend when television reporters in a helicopter belonging to the Chiapas state government arrived in the community of La Realidad, close to the EZLN headquarters.

They filmed members of the civilian "peace camp" in the village, many of whom are Europeans, and presented this as evidence that the EZLN was run by foreigners. "This was an action planned in conjunction with the interior ministry," said the opposition congressman Gilberto López y Rivas, a

member of the parliamentary peace commission for Chiapas (Coopepa).

The aim, he said, was "to obtain TV footage to kick off their strategy of propaganda and manipulation".

Since the Christmas massacre in Acteal of 45 indigenous peasants, mostly women and children, by PRI-affiliated paramilitaries, the presence of foreign observers in the state has increased substantially, to the irritation of the army and civilian authorities.

A total of 53 people have been arrested so far for alleged involvement in the massacre. They include two former state police commanders who were jailed on Thursday.

Roberto García Rivas and Roberto Martín Méndez are accused of involvement in arms procurement and protecting the paramilitary killers. The two denied the charges and said they were merely "scapegoats" for more senior figures.

Mystery clouds germ warfare 'plot'

The alleged terrorists found with anthrax say they were making an antidote, writes Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

AS FBI agents carried out tests on the store of anthrax found in Nevada this week, bizarre theories about the possible motives of two alleged terrorists carrying the deadly germ were emerging. Were they bungling scientists trying to save America from biological warfare? Or were they microbiologists with extremist beliefs who were plotting to kill hundreds of thousands of people?

The co-founders of anthrax were found in a Mercedes car carrying William Job Leavitt, aged 47, and 46-year-old Larry Wayne Harris in a suburb of Las Vegas on Wednesday.

The two men face charges of possessing the biological agent "for use as a weapon" and are being held in prison.

But Mr Leavitt's lawyer, Lamond Mills, said the arrests were a terrible mistake. Mr Mills said his client was a respectable family man with a fire protection business who lives in a modest bungalow in the Nevada desert town of Logandale. The material found in the car would turn out to be "harmless animal anthrax vaccine", he said.

It has also been claimed that Mr Leavitt is a microbiologist who has laboratories in Logandale and in Frankfurt, Germany. According to this theory, Mr Leavitt and Mr Harris were developing a cure for anthrax infection. Mr Harris, who is currently

on probation for receiving frozen bubonic plague germs through the post on false pretences, wrote and published a book, *Bacteriological Warfare: A Major Threat to North America*, in which he described taking advanced microbiology courses at Ohio State University in 1991.

The FBI said Mr Harris is a licensed public health microbiologist with his own business in Ohio. Until recently he was a member of the racist hate group, Aryan Nations.

In court Mr Harris said he could not afford a lawyer. But the FBI said that he and Mr Leavitt were found negotiating with the bureau's informant — a cancer scientist they met at a conference — to pay \$2 million (\$1.2 million) in advance and \$18 million later for testing equipment.

While Mr Harris was under FBI surveillance in Las Vegas, he appeared on a local

Christian television programme promoting research theories based on his knowledge of Iraq. He claimed to have obtained this knowledge through his links with the CIA from 1985 to 1990 while he was training Iraqi scientists in biological warfare.

He claimed Iraqi agents who are immune to anthrax infection have infiltrated into the United States. If the US bombed Iraq, he claimed, the agents would release the germs to kill thousands of Americans, but they could be saved with the antidote.

In a 1997 documentary that was never broadcast, Mr Harris described how he had obtained anthrax spores by linking a metal probe into an old burial site for cows infected with the animal disease.

He described how anthrax sprayed from the air could kill at least 100,000 people. Asked if he had active anthrax in his lab, he smiled.

His public defender, Michael Kennedy, summed up versions of the case, saying: "We know there's a joker in the deck, but we don't know who it is."



William Leavitt (centre) and Larry Wayne Harris (right) are charged with possessing anthrax for use as a weapon.

US anthrax arrests expose loophole

Richard Norton-Taylor

THE arrests of two men who were allegedly planning to bomb the New York subway system with anthrax exposed a potential loophole in controls imposed by the United States to counter the threat of chemical and biological terrorism.

Larry Wayne Harris, one of the men, is a former lieutenant of the white supremacist group Aryan Nations. He is also an experienced microbiologist, but he needed help from a medical

research scientist to test the anthrax.

Scientists and students of terrorism said chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, which can be used to make deadly nerve gas, and germs and toxins to produce biological weapons, are widely used in medicine and agriculture. They noted that the substances were easy to transport, in steel flasks for example.

But they stressed the difficulty of disseminating the substances and producing CB weapons in a form which could be used in a terrorist attack.

The Aum Shinrikyo cult,

which killed 12 people and injured more than 5,000 in a sarin nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway in 1995, had recruited scientists and microbiologists, but if the sarin had been dispersed as planned, many more would have died.

A report leaked this week from the House of Representatives task force on terrorism and unconventional warfare said Saddam Hussein had smuggled chemical weapons to Sudan, Yemen and Algeria, and that Iraqi scientists experimenting in biological weapons had been sent to Libya.

Police replaced by private enterprise

If you're kidnapped in Karachi, then put your faith in local businessmen not lawmen, writes Richard Galpin

FOR 18 days, Nazir Chakrani, a senior all executive from Karachi, was held hostage in the jungles of Sindh province, in Pakistan. By day he was forced to march for up to seven hours through the thick undergrowth. At night he was chained to a tree and given just enough food to keep him alive.

Mr Chakrani, like several other prominent businessmen, had been dragged from his car at gunpoint in Karachi, Pakistan's commercial capital and one of the most violent and lawless cities in south Asia. His kidnappers demanded a ransom of \$250,000.

Suddenly the tables were turned. "One morning at about five o'clock I was woken up by the sound of gunfire," he says. "The kidnappers panicked, released me, then tried to run away."

Mr Chakrani had been rescued after a painstaking investigation by the police but by a voluntary organisation, the Citizens-Police Liaison Committee (CPLC), which is rapidly replacing the police force as Karachi's most reliable law-enforcement agency.

"If my family had relied on the police and not the CPLC, I don't think I'd have been released without paying the ransom," he says.

The CPLC was set up in 1989 by a group of businessmen who had little faith that the Karachi police — regarded as the most corrupt in the country — would tackle a wave of kidnappings in a city torn by ethnic violence which has claimed thousands of lives.

With the blessing of the provincial governor and the intelligence agencies a small group of volunteers set up an office in the city centre, largely funded by contributions from local people. In its first year the CPLC resolved more than

"People do not trust the police. So ultimately we took over their role"

80 per cent of kidnapping cases; the victims were released unharmed, no money changed hands and eight gangs were jailed.

Nine years later it is a fully-fledged crime detection and prevention agency with phone-tapping and voice-matching equipment, a data-base of all known criminals in the area, and software to create identikit pictures. This is being used in the hunt for the men who shot dead four US oil company workers last November. "Initially, we were only

supposed to be a kind of watchdog between the police and the public," says the CPLC's founder, Jameel Yousuf. "But when we started we realised the police machinery in Karachi had totally collapsed."

"The police lack the training for crime detection, they lack equipment and they lack qualified people. And because the police force has been politicised, people do not trust them. So ultimately, we took over their role because people wanted us to do it."

Although senior police officials defend their record, they are also surprisingly candid about their shortcomings. "This is a common problem in under-developed countries," admits Javed Iqbal, the city's deputy inspector-general of police. "Our recruitment is not correct and we don't have training facilities. Generally, standards have declined."

That decline is reflected in the number of private security guards employed in the city. Ten years ago there were some 2,000. Now there are up to 30,000. One big bank has 35 armed guards posted outside and inside the building to protect it from armed robbery and terrorist attack.

With the recent change of government, we expect the police will be revamped and re-organised to build up a proper institution once and for all," Mr Yusuf says. That is wishful thinking. Reform of the police does not even figure on the government's agenda.

Spain drops hard line on Basque plan for peace

Adela Gooch in Madrid

THE Spanish government has given guarded backing to a plan devised by mainstream Basque nationalists to bring about a negotiated end to the separatist group ETA's 30-year campaign of violence.

The prime minister, José María Aznar, reacted cautiously to the proposal that would pave the way to involving Herri Batasuna, ETA's political wing, in the peace process. But his decision not to reject it outright marked a departure from the hard line he has so far adopted.

Mr Aznar has insisted that an unconditional, prolonged ETA ceasefire must precede any talks. The ceasefire condition remains, but he now appears willing to let the Basque regional president, José Antonio Ardanza, explore possibilities for a negotiated settlement with the ruling out direct talks with ETA.

Mr Ardanza wants to give fresh impetus to the *mesa de Aizurra Enea* — a framework set up in 1989 whereby all Basque political forces that condemn violence hold regular talks at Aizurra Enea, the regional seat of government. He wants them to agree on key Basque issues to pave a way for HB involvement.

On Thursday Mr Aznar rejected Mr Ardanza's suggestion that the government should be bound by majority positions agreed by the *mesa*, and said he could only contemplate proposals encompassed in the existing constitutional framework, which grants the Basque country and Catalonia a large measure of autonomy but leaves no grounds for Spanish sovereignty to be questioned.

Borneo chokes as fires rage

Last year noxious smoke choked Thailand. Now the islands of Sumatra and Borneo are enveloped in smog as their forests go up in flames, writes John Aglionby in Jakarta

SMOG from forest and brush fires in Indonesia is blanketing parts of Borneo and Sumatra, bringing respiratory problems, the closure of airports and warnings from Singapore of disasters to come.

The Indonesian authorities appear to be deliberately understating the severity of the problem. But foreign observers and local non-governmental organisations predict a repeat of last year's catastrophe when polluted haze spread from Sumatra to Thailand. Already more than 31,000 acres of forest have been razed, and satellites have detected hundreds of fires on both islands.

"The situation is going to get much worse," said one analyst, "because it is being exacerbated by a second massive drought across Indonesia in less than a year and the government's failure to check the fires that cause the haze."

East Kalimantan on Borneo is the worst-affected area. This year there has been no significant rainfall during the normal wet months. Tempering a drought in the province, capital Samarinda, has been closed 17 days in the month due to the haze.

The fires are having a dire effect on animals. Orangutans in Kutai National Park, 75 miles north of Samarinda, have been seen fleeing the jungle after 4,000 acres of their habitat was engulfed in flames and smoke. "I have never seen so many orangutans running around so close to human settlements before. Every animal in the park seemed to be panicking," one park ranger said.

Ludwig Schindler, the leader of the International Forest Fire Management (IFFM) project based in Samarinda, said there was a 50 per cent chance no rain would come until July. "The fires have escalated so it is impossible to fight them all."

The drought, caused by the El Niño effect which disrupts the climate in the tropical Pacific, has also affected Borneo in east Kalimantan. At least 25,000 people are facing severe food shortages. "They think their only way out seems to be to burn more land to cultivate," said a researcher for the Indonesian Forum for the Environment.

Mr Schindler's team has been training army officers to fight the fires, the army being the only Indonesian body with the necessary resources. However, since last week the army has cut back its activity. "It's a question of priorities," said a spokesman for the Tanjungpura military command in Kalimantan.

The social unrest in Indonesia is one priority. Riots are occurring daily over rising prices caused by the seven-month economic crisis, and the army — of 220,000 recruits in a population of 202 million — is at full stretch.

In Sumatra, the worst haze has been in Riau province, less than 30 miles from Singapore. Here hot spots cluster in the same places day after day, suggesting many of these fires are not small slash-and-burn affairs but big conflagrations started by companies clearing land to extend plantations.

The smog in Sumatra this month has been kept in check only by the odd shower. "Luckily, it has rained three times in the last two days," said a resident of the Riau capital, Pekanbaru. "Before that we had no rain for the last three weeks, and the haze got so thick we couldn't see the end of the road."

Singapore, which was shrouded in smog for several months last year, has had haze twice this month. The city issues pollution-level updates every three hours. "After the horrors of last year, we cannot be too prepared," said a spokesman at Singapore's meteorology centre.



Riots erupt as Chinese blamed for price rises

RIOTING in Kendari, Sulawesi, yesterday was the latest outburst to rock Indonesia in its worst economic crisis for 30 years. The military patrolled the streets warning that rioters would be shot, following protests on Thursday by a 10,000-strong crowd over high food prices.

About 50 residents were arrested and dozens of shops and houses, mainly owned by Chinese, were damaged.

The Chinese — like this elderly woman pictured praying — are trying to mitigate the view that they control commerce and so are responsible for the rise in the cost of some basic foods by 400 per cent, but have tried to overcome the hostility by donating food and donating to poor communities. The Chinese dominate commerce but complain they are being made scapegoats for economic problems out of their control. AP, Kendari.

PHOTOGRAPH: ANDY EAMES

After Kofi returns . . . Then the bombing dilemma?

AS KOFI ANNAN begins talks in Baghdad, we should already be thinking of what will happen when he returns. If only he could secure an unambiguous signed agreement from Saddam Hussein . . . But he is much more likely to bring back an ambiguous commitment which those who sent him to Baghdad will then have to weigh. The divide between the US-British axis and the rest of the Permanent Five is already clear, but a crucial difference has also emerged between Washington and London. Over there, the Clinton administration does not mind if its diplomatic bluff is called, because it has always believed that bombing made sense. Over here, increasingly, we do mind. The imminent prospect of ordering RAF pilots into action alongside the Americans has brought home, even to our Whitehall warriors, the limitations of military action.

For the British Government, the carefully orchestrated build-up to this confrontation began with a simple proposition — that with a thug like Saddam Hussein, diplomatic persuasion only works if it is backed by the threat of force. As Tony Blair, Robin Cook and George Robertson took turns to argue this

case, we must assume they understood what every competent schoolteacher knows — that a threat only works if you really mean it. But when "meaning it" involved just moving an aircraft carrier to the Gulf, this was a lot easier. Had the final decision been taken a week or two ago, things might still have gone smoothly. It was the drawn-out process of trying to legitimise military action through the UN — something on which the UK particularly insisted — which gave time for critics to chip away at the argument.

Ministers have progressively conceded that the UN does not know where Saddam's chemical and biological weapons are hidden, that dispersing them with bombs would be dangerous, that civilian casualties are inevitable, and that the UN inspectors' success in destroying all but the remnants of Saddam's weapons is at risk if air strikes mean they cannot return.

On the other side of the balance there remains the Government's conviction that bombing chemical plants would delay Saddam's nerve gas production by many years — according to Mr Cook "without any risk to human life" — and that hitting his military infrastructure would weaken his grip on power. The Government also asserts that such strikes would maintain the authority of the UN, though how this could be so if the inspectors had meanwhile been thrown out, or totally obstructed, is difficult to understand.

Senior American officials have been at pains to make it clear, ever since Mr Annan's mission to Baghdad got the green light, that the US does not regard

the authority of the UN as the only criterion. Madeleine Albright, after her public mauling at Nashville, put it very plainly. "The president is commander-in-chief and he will make the decision in terms of our national interests." The inference is that Washington's interests may be different from those of the international community as represented by the UN.

If national interest is invoked in this way, where does that leave Tony Blair? Perhaps he judges Britain's interests to lie primarily in showing solidarity with President Clinton: in which case, he will follow Washington's line whether or not it leads to military action. But it would be more prudent to reserve the right to take an independent view. Many who are not in the traditional "anti-war" lobby still see this confrontation as a deadly sort of poker game — where having to resort to air strikes means you've lost.

The laws of sex

Equal treatment is overdue

IT WOULD HAVE been oppressive justice if any of the seven gay men in the Bolton Case had been sent to jail. Convicted earlier this month on charges arising out of private sex parties which they videoed, they were either given suspended sentences or probation and community service. But should they ever have been charged?

The barriers of public sexual tolerance have been pushed back a long way further since the 1967 Sexual Offences Act which permitted gay sex — but only if no more than two men took part or were present. Most people would now subscribe to the common sense view that there should be no distinction between what the law allows for heterosexuals and for homosexuals. In fact the police generally reflect the same view by exercising discretion when the law is technically broken by gays. They appear to have proceeded against men in Bolton because of an alleged "aggravating factor" — that one of the group was six months under the age of consent — i.e. that he was not yet 18. Yet this too runs up against an evident lack of equity. The European Commission has already ruled that it is unlawful for Britain to maintain different ages of consent for men and women: it cannot be long before the age of consent for gay sex is lowered to 16 too. There was no suggestion in the Bolton proceedings that any of the men participated unwillingly. Nor was there any element of sadomasochism — although whether such practices should attract the attention of the law is itself a contentious area.

The public mood has moved in the last few decades by several centuries. This is an area where Jack Straw should institute legal change without any electoral qualm. Most people do not censure private consensual activities of whatever kind. They are more likely to criticise the abuse of power in a one-to-one sexual relationship — such as that of president to intern.

Letters to the Editor

Lifting up the masonic apron

YOUR leader (Laying bare the masons — Why not add the MPs? February 18) does not go nearly far enough. In 1970s I worked for a public utility. There was a contract which the lowest bidder, a local tradesman, seemed quite capable of fulfilling. It was awarded to another contractor who lived about 30 miles away, but who happened to belong to the same masonic lodge as the boss.

Another mason, who was utterly unsuitable to continue in his current job, was to be downgraded. Whilst in the office adjacent, I heard the unmistakable voice of the director, also a mason, booming over the conference phone: "X must be given this job! There must be some integrity in the square!" He was reappointed.

In 1981, as a Labour councillor in Greater Manchester, I wrote asking that the ruling Labour Group should require all councillors and officials to register their membership. The secretary asked me earnestly to withdraw my letter saying that I had no idea what masonry was all about and that I would be needlessly upsetting valued members of the party.

From about 90 Labour councillors present, my resolution received but 11 votes. Jack Straw, in trying to drag masonry into the light of day, has no idea of the opposition he will have to face. Mike Hynde, Oldham, Lancs.

ASA Catholic I am prohibited on pain of excommunication from joining the

trouser-leg lifting brotherhood. However, I find myself uneasy with the tone of your leader. There must be some way of allaying public fears without some of the intrusive measures you suggest. Dr Paul Keeley, Glasgow.

CHRIS MULLIN seems more like the "Witchfinder General" than the Home Affairs Select Committee chairman, in demanding the identification of Freemasons.

I am not a Freemason, but Mr Mullin's attitude is eerily reminiscent of post-war McCarthy (remember the persistent question "Are you, or have you ever been, a Communist?") and pre-war Nazi Germany in its registration of Jews. Dr Garry Fawcett, Melbourne, Derby.

ANYONE who has worked in the police service knows that the real problem is the career advancement given to Freemasons — the mafia of the masonic.

The growing band of women masons should also declare their membership. Women police officers have taken on obligations extremely seriously indeed. Chris D Killeen, Chadderton, Oldham.

THERE are seemingly inextricable links between local government and Freemasonry. Bidders for local government contracts, applicants for plan-

ning consent etc were also required to disclose whether or not they are masons.

In fact why have secret societies at all? If membership is not designed to provide an unfair advantage, why should it be secret? Jane Coker, London N15.

LORD Justice Millett's remonstrance against public declaration of masonic membership, "You can't choose which judge will try your case, so what's the point," said he. (Freemasons get ultimatum, February 18).

Surely he must be aware that Sir Maurice Dwyer stood down from a murder trial in 1996 after the defence submitted that his masonic membership might influence his decision. It involved a member of a Luton-based social justice collective called Exodus, who have had several public clanging matches with masons in Bedfordshire.

The defendant was subsequently acquitted by the replacement judge.

An appeal case over the future of a farm property occupied by Exodus was heard this year in the High Court. Two of the three judges who returned a negative decision in this case turned out to be top-ranking masons — Lord Justice Balcombe (Senior Grand Warden of British masonry) and the very same Lord Justice Millett.

Exodus's legal team made no submission for them to stand down. Had they known they would have done. Jim Carey, London.

FEAR of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy was rife in 19th century Europe. Both were closed communities conducting incomprehensible rituals. The Frenchmen who singled out the foreigner Captain Dreyfus for persecution likewise condemned the Freemasons who defended him. In the mid-20th century, the extermination of both groups was attempted.

Why, nearly a century after Dreyfus' pardon, is it still acceptable to suspect any minority of some world conspiracy? Perhaps Mr Straw should publish lists of all minority groups in the establishment.

Jonathan Rose, Jesus College, Oxford.

While welcoming the Government's recognition of the problem and its apparent willingness to invest more resources in low income families, it is important to question what choice might mean in practice.

Research evidence regard-

ing the dynamics of financial decision-making raises serious doubts as to how real such a choice would be in safeguarding a tax credit as money to be spent on the children. In the most inegalitarian families, women are unlikely to have the power to exercise the choice in their own favour. Even in other families, there may be a reluctance to challenge a presumption that this is money to top up the man's low wages. It is, therefore, essential that the choice is presented to claimants in such a way as to legitimate the existing notion that the money is for the family and for the mother to control.

Prof Ruth Lister, Loughborough University.

thought when confronted with a back, his right hand stuffed deep into the pocket of a grubby baggy shirt, grating violently with a snarl grin on his face? I've always trusted in a good memory myself.

Jeremy Miles, Bournemouth, Dorset.

We do not publish letters where we supplied the address. We will, however, publish letters where we supplied the address. We will, however, publish letters where we supplied the address.

One wonders what on earth the man in question must have



Purse power

TWO articles this week (Paid as you earn, February 16, and Full Service is overdue, February 18) suggest that the "purse to wallet" problem of a transfer of resources from women to men in low income families, created by tax credits, can be solved by giving couples choice as to who receives the money.

While welcoming the Government's recognition of the problem and its apparent willingness to invest more resources in low income families, it is important to question what choice might mean in practice.

Research evidence regard-

ing the dynamics of financial decision-making raises serious doubts as to how real such a choice would be in safeguarding a tax credit as money to be spent on the children. In the most inegalitarian families, women are unlikely to have the power to exercise the choice in their own favour. Even in other families, there may be a reluctance to challenge a presumption that this is money to top up the man's low wages. It is, therefore, essential that the choice is presented to claimants in such a way as to legitimate the existing notion that the money is for the family and for the mother to control.

Prof Ruth Lister, Loughborough University.

thought when confronted with a back, his right hand stuffed deep into the pocket of a grubby baggy shirt, grating violently with a snarl grin on his face? I've always trusted in a good memory myself.

Jeremy Miles, Bournemouth, Dorset.

We do not publish letters where we supplied the address. We will, however, publish letters where we supplied the address. We will, however, publish letters where we supplied the address.

One wonders what on earth the man in question must have

Our pain, their pay-off

I AM writing in response to your report that Gerry Adams' cousin, David Adams, had been awarded £30,000 damages against the Royal Ulster Constabulary for injuries received after his arrest when police failed an attempt to murder a senior detective (RUC pays damages to Adams' cousin, February 19).

In Northern Ireland compensation is paid for pain and suffering resulting from injuries and in cases of financial dependency if a person is killed. There is no compensation if a person who is single is killed and had no dependants.

We learnt this bizarre fact when our son, Stephen, was killed by the IRA. As he was single we were not eligible for any compensation whatsoever.

Stephen was on duty at an army checkpoint when he was

killed. Because the situation in N Ireland is not seen as war but as a security/policing operation, the man who has been arrested has been charged with murder. The powers that be have decided that, because Stephen died within half an hour of being shot, no compensation is due as it can only be paid in the case of pain if the person survives.

So, compensation for one life is nil; compensation for a broken leg, two fractured ribs, a punctured lung and cuts and bruises is £30,000. It truly is an upside down world. We have lost the possibility of seeing Stephen marry and have children and the possibility of his help when we reach old age.

No compensation is payable for that nor the heartache and grief his death caused us. Rita Restorick, Peterborough.

No spitting in this corner

I WAS astonished at the reactionary vehemence of Noel Hannon's reply (Letters, February 18) to Anthony Burgess's comments on this week's 1997 Pub Design Awards. As the author of the awards' Judges Report, I was delighted to honour a pub which has combined the best features of a basic, traditional boozery with good, unfussy and subtle contemporary design.

The furnishings of this splendid pub — seats included — are of a plain and functional type which will last for a good many years, which is more than can be said for the catalogue repro chairs to be found in most "heritage" horrors.

Mr Hannon, in his accusations that the pub resembles

"an ice cream parlour" appears to be inhabiting a world where pubs are purely for old men spitting in the corner, with women and children permitted only to press their noses against the window glass. His evocation of "trendy lefties" is entirely missing the point: the idea of such awards — and surely the point of the Labour movement as a whole — is to help fashion a better environment (and in this case, a better drinking environment) for everyone, rather than to perpetuate a class-obsessed time warp. Good design should surely be available to all, and not be the privilege of the few. Dr Steven Parfitt, London.

Iraq: rapid rebuttal

I WOULD like to contest the "facts" of Robin Cook's article on sanctions (Saddam is to blame, February 20). He states that "the sanctions regime does not prevent food or medicines from getting to the Iraqi people". My mother is Iraqi and, on a recent visit home, she saw the effects of the sanctions. It is sometimes possible to get hold of medicines, but only if you have the right contacts and if you are able to pay extortionate sums. It is necessary to fill a shopping bag full of dinars in order to pay for a week's supply of groceries. My grandmother was in hospital with anaemia. To pay for the drugs, her family was forced to sell one of their residences. Selwa Calderbank, Trinity Hall, Cambridge.

MAGGIE O'Kane's harrowing account of Baghdad's hospitals was most compelling (February 19). Still, I wonder why wasn't she allowed a glimpse inside Ibn-Sina and Al-Baitar hospitals where Uday Saddam Hussein's life was saved after an assassination attempt and where Saddam's cronies are kept in perfect health?

If the dictator can offer to equip those hospitals with the best technology and medicine, why can't he try one tenth of the same for the other hospitals? For Saddam it is a game where the innocents are used to play on the sentiments of the decent people of the outside world. Sarkawt Azbani, Sheffield.

FOR a debate on Iraq, MPs are called to speak in order of seniority, making it virtually impossible for a new MP to be called (Labour's new MP's take over amid talk of war,

February 19). Surely your political correspondent is aware of this, making her attack on newly elected MPs for not speaking all the more spurious.

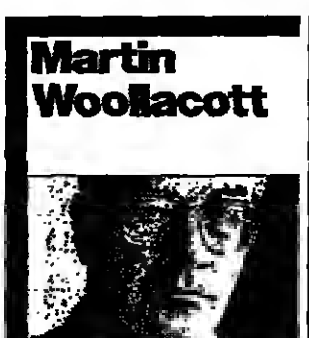
I hope diplomacy succeeds and I want to avoid war. But Saddam is a despot who has gassed his own people and murdered members of his own family. Ultimately, if he refuses to comply with UN rulings not to develop chemical and biological weapons, military force will be justified. Bill Rammell MP, House of Commons.

IN RECENT days your Letters page has been dominated by opponents of military action in the Gulf who either hold absurd views about the malign motives of the "monster" America, or whose emotions lead them to ignore the fact that the Iraqi regime is largely responsible for, and unconcerned about, the suffering of its people. Not all opponents of military force think this way. Instead, we point to the certainty that military action will end the current inspection regime, to the low probability that it will destroy any chemical or biological weapons, and the high probability that it will do nothing to undermine Saddam's political position. Indeed it will actually enhance his status in the Arab world, which will be all too conscious of the ironies involved in the allies of the faltering Arab state for concealing weapons of mass destruction. Prof Chris Brown, Southampton University.

BEN Oki's doggerel (On The Eve, February 18) does little to dispel the vulgar errors that poetry is about rhyme, not reason, that capital letters mean more than small ones and that communication is improved by saying something twice. Alan Booth, Northwood, Middx.

Intervening in the world's troubles has been an unhappy experience

The policeman's lot



Martin Woolacott

THE Gulf crises of 1991 and 1998 frame a period in which intervention, in all its forms from economic sanctions to lengthy military operations, moved dramatically to the centre of international affairs. The growing expectation that large scale collective responses to all kinds of troubles will be organised, whether they are natural disasters, wars, or financial collapses, and the sharp post-mortems when those responses are delayed or ineffective, shows how much attitudes have changed in less than a decade.

But does the reaction to the Iraq confrontation, with so many voices arguing that it is better to let Saddam alone, indicate another, contradictory current of feeling? Are we beating the retreat from intervention? The point has been made repeatedly that not a single intervention, peace process, or policy of conditionality in these years can be deemed a full success. The range in

military operations goes from the complete disaster in Somalia to the very partial success of the Dayton Accords in Yugoslavia. In peace diplomacy, we have the paralysis of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and the impasse in Cyprus, while the UN Cambodian operation led, not to the consolidation of democracy, but to a coup. Where trade and recognition are withheld to sanction erring governments, there has been little success in influencing the behaviour of the Nigerian and Burmese regimes, and the continuing ineffectiveness of human rights related policies on China.

This patchy record undoubtedly affects the way in which the public perceives intervention. There has been a widespread perception that there are no workable instruments for dealing with Saddam, and a short-sighted refusal to look beyond the immediate and war-like means. There is the strange way in which the victims of Saddam's policies have become, for many, a secondary level headed people, the victims of the West. Thus the suffering of the sick children in the hospitals on which he refuses to spend his still substantial funds is laid at the door of the US and Britain. That might be fair, if America was blamed for its failure to bring down a dictator who sacrifices children. But the

conclusion is, apparently, not that Saddam ought to be removed from power, but, amazingly, that he should be left in power.

More broadly, what is happening now represents a repudiation of the lessons of the nineties. One of those was that collective action without the Americans usually failed, but so did American action without genuine collective support. There was an emerging understanding between the US and other countries that compromises between American and collective interests were part of the craft of intervention, and that the mistakes of Bosnia and Rwanda ought not to be repeated. But, psychologically, the idea that the interventions of the nineties have not worked and should not be repeated, on the one hand, and an easy anti-Americanism on the other.

The failures and half successes of these years are part of a larger picture, one more conducive to optimism. One way of describing it is as the simultaneous emergence of four transnational orders, economic, moral, informational, and military. In terms of conditionality, the integrated world economy is important because it makes the consequences of being cut off from that economy more serious, and the consequences of being reconnected more attractive.

In other words it reinforces the potential power of economic sanctions and rewards. One recent example is the North Korean agreement to end certain types of weapons-related nuclear work in return for being supplied with modern reactors. Globalisation also reinforces the need for economic measures of intervention. Like the rapid IMF reaction to the Asian stocks and currency crisis, even though it was in some ways very flawed.

A moral order is characterised by the growth of

transnational charitable organisations which, as Michael Ignatieff puts it in his recent book, *The Warrior's Honour*, take the whole world as their political and moral space. We have never before had such a dense network of specialist agencies monitoring the world and even now finding new niches to occupy in the diverse ecology of aid, development, early warning, and assistance to civil society.

This function is intimately related, as Ignatieff argues, to the arrival of "CNN effect" was at first mainly defined as the impact of the running news show that enabled people round the world to watch the same Scud explosion or diplomatic encounter in real time. But the deeper result, prefigured in the Vietnam War and in the Ethiopian famine, was to expand moral consciousness by reducing the distance between people living in comfort and safety and those living in fear, war, and poverty. In that process, non-governmental organisations and the media became partners, co-operating in sensitising the public and bringing governments, who often wished to look the other way, up to the mark.

Finally, one of the reasons why physical intervention has occurred more frequently is simply that the capacity for it was there as a legacy of a half century of Cold War spending and Cold War alliance experience. Without the existence of a formidable, or apparently formidable, military capacity in the United States, Europe, and Russia, the pressure for intervention would not have been so intense. Pressure grew, not only for particular interventions, but for military establishments to be better equipped for intervention in general.

Toward the end of the decade, in spite of all the problems, the idea was gaining ground that international action to prevent crises would be better grounded if the arrangements to deal with actual emergencies were more automatic. Gov-

ernments which know, because of their commitments, that they will be called on for money, troops or other resources in the event of disasters, whether military, ecological, or financial, are more likely to be interested in preventing those emergencies. The creation of a UN standing force, for instance, even if countries could still withdraw their contingents from a particular mission, would, simply by being there, change attitudes.

A decade of sometimes bitter and frustrating experience has produced a body of critical thinking about interventions of all kinds, including but going beyond the military operations that often hog the cameras. At the same time, the dangers of a falling out over the Middle East that could affect the possibilities for collective action in the future are obvious. The story of the decade is one of the forging of stronger links between information, capacity, and policy in the international sphere, but the possibility of regression is evident. The very real difficulties of effective intervention can easily create a mood in which it is seen as likely to make a bad world worse, or in which it is attacked as a hangover from Western imperialism. But the truth is that intervention is, at its best, nothing more or less than action based on the conviction that it is worth trying to set the world to rights, and without that we are nothing.

2000/02/21/150

Games for a laugh

Mark Lawson



NEVER before can one week have seen such a conjunction between sport at its best — the electrifying third test between England and the West Indies in Trinidad — and sport (or, rather, "sport") at its worst: the soporific 1998 Winter Olympics, which finish in Nagano, Japan. At the same time, the question of what deserves to be called sport has been urgently raised by the surprising news that snooker may become an event at the 2004 summer Olympics, at which contest ballroom dancers may also compete.

The Winter Olympics used to follow the same four-year turn-around as their more famous summer brother but were moved to the gap year between Atlanta 1996 and Sydney 2000 to allow them to develop separately. This has proved to be a disastrous move. While the snow sports were just about tolerable as a warm-up for the serious August beats, they seem preposterous as a stand-alone event.

Where true sport ideally strives for the heroic, the winter Olympic disciplines remain essentially comic. Curling, for example, seems perfectly named: the word describes the embarrassed reflex of the television viewer. Starting off like some cartoonist's pun on the words "ice rink" and "bowling rink", it suddenly turns into housework as teams of assistants brush the ice to make the throw travel further. Watching this — and then, two days later, hiding behind a cushion as England inched towards victory in Trinidad — I started to construct a list of rules for the

Even their winners seem like losers

occurrence of a great sporting event.

The first qualification is that it should involve a skill to which huge numbers of other people aspire but which they are unable to perform at such a high level. Many death-bed regrets are expressed about failure to have represented England at cricket or to have won Wimbledon, but it is hard to imagine many dying in torment at an earthly existence completed without curling or snowboarding for Great Britain. By this rule, the Winter Olympics is pretty much a write-out, with the exception of the skating.

The most crucial factors, though, are the related ones of time and the possibility of plot twists. The fact that test cricket is played at a length unequalled by any other game allows it to be thrilling at a level unavailable to other sports, simply because of the scope for narrative reverses. For me, the Olympic 100 metres sprint is too brief and too dependent on what happens at the start to be regarded as great sport.

DURING a game like the one in Trinidad this week, it was easy to see why so many like literary types have been tempted by the numerical coincidence between five-act tragedy and five-day cricket. The theatrical appeal of the game was underlined by the existence of an English Playwrights XI, with Plater batting and Stoppard keeping wicket. Like drama, test cricket allows for unexpected character development. In England's victory, the key bowling came from a player, Angus Fraser, widely written off after an

injury two years ago, and the important runs were scored by Mark Butcher, a third choice for the game after two other batsmen were injured.

The third rule is that the competitors in any given contest — whether there are two or thirty — should be taking part at the same time, with the simultaneous ability to influence the result. This knocks out skiing, horse-jumping, most gymnastic events and also all ice-dancing, which would anyway have been disqualified by rule four.

That stricture is that the result should be as far as possible a matter of fact rather than opinion. Ice-dancing is the most notorious offender against this rule as the only athletic discipline which scores by focus-group. The one serious weakness of cricket is that it involves so much personal judgment — from the umpire on laws and run-outs — which can seriously affect the outcome. Similarly, many last week-end's football FA Cup ties were disfigured by disputed penalty kicks.

FINALLY, we expect professional sports performers to possess an unusual level of physical fitness. Darts and snooker — both of which have seen their share of bronchitic and alcoholic superstars — have tended to be marked down by Olympian purists for this reason. Even cricket, it has to be said, is at risk of disqualification on this point, being the only one of the run-around games in which fifty fags a day and five pints and three curries a night have not been a bar to a significant professional career.

Complications sometimes arise from the application of these precepts. For example, tennis — though easily meeting all the qualifications of a great sport — ceases to be one only at Olympic level. This is partly because we strongly suspect that it was forced in by the desires of American television networks and corporate sponsors. But another reason is that tennis is primarily an individual game which is weakened by the team element. Indeed, it is probably the only game in which the international fixtures (the Davis Cup) attract far less interest than the domestic competitions.

Snooker — the newest Olympic sport — is another curious case. Apart from the beer-gut objection cited above, it fits most of the criteria for compelling competition. Certainly, dramatic reversal is possible: a famously tense 1985 World Championship final between Dennis Taylor and Steve Davis — in which the last ball took nearly half an hour to put away — routinely makes the lists of great sporting events. The game's only serious problem from a competitive point of view is that the activity is entirely individual. If one player has a flash of brilliance, producing a long break, then the skill and preparation of their opponent becomes irrelevant. They are not even given the chance to take part in the contest. (The "big serve" in men's tennis has had the effect of frequently turning a two-player game into a snooker-like individual display.) Yet this structural frustration is not enough to explain snooker's image problem and the fact that the green baize becoming an Olympic arena seems instinctively ridiculous.

Much of the problem is social prejudice deriving from snooker's association with smoochy pubs and blokes with nothing better to do. Even middle-class literary approbation for the activity — articles by Martin Amis and Julian Barnes, a book by Gordon Burn — has failed to validate the game in the way that a similar burst of bookish cheerleading achieved for football.

Sport — to work at its best — requires athleticism, high drama and glamour. None of the summer Olympic late-comers — or the winter Olympic sports at all — can achieve this combination, and so even their winners seem like losers. They're just not cricket.



Cake-icers

Catherine Bennett



IN 1942, five Giant Evils seemed quite enough to be going on with. Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness — "which destroys wealth and corrupts men" — these, wrote William Beveridge, would be the principal targets of his great plan. Somehow, however, this

otherwise wise and far-sighted man overlooked a sixth affliction: the Giant Evil of Tiwarded Creativity. In consequence — and at an untold cost to British culture — aspiring artists were not exempted from the requirement that those in receipt of state benefits, should, in return, be genuinely available for work. The poet Philip Larkin, was a typical victim. In 1943, having just come down from Oxford, he received a letter from the Ministry of Labour asking about his plans. He could, he wrote later, have answered that "I was living at home writing a novel, but I rightly adjudged the enquiry to be a warning that I had better start doing something". He picked up day's Birmingham Post, and saw an advertisement for a librarian. Since then, a

more enlightened DSS has allowed innumerable young people to concentrate on self-expression. Those proud British exports, Jarvis Cocker, Alexander McQueen and Liam Gallagher were each fostered on benefit. Without such state support, it is claimed, we might also have lost the anarchist Chumbawamba, the subversive Sarah Lucas. Even the arts minister, Mark Fisher, has acknowledged the conflict between welfare reform and creativity. His own stepson, lead singer of the Longpigs, lived off benefit and government schemes for eight years. Beveridge has been proved wrong. Far from being a Giant Evil, idleness is now recognised, as an inspirer of men, and creator of wealth. Alan McGee, the director of Creation Records,

points out that Britpop has made lots of money for the Government — and how does the Government respond? Far from being grateful to young people, McGee protests, it wants them to work — even if they don't want to. "If we want the benefits that music brings," he warned recently, "We have to allow the musicians to eat."

We have to allow the musicians to eat

he prefers to grab DSS money for his prentice warblers, rather than demand proper arts grants. Supposing he is right, and unsupervised DSS-funded leisure is essential to the nation's cultural health, how is it to be allocated? We must assume that popular musicians, Mr McGee's

Battles everywhere

Matthew Engel



AT MOMENTS like this it is necessary to go back to the classics. The fundamental treatise on war, as studied in every military academy for the past 150 years, is Von Clausewitz (1780-1831), a Prussian soldier whose life and outlook were dominated by the wars against Napoleon.

Naturally he knew nothing of germ warfare, air power, precision bombing, UN resolutions or CNN. But he laid down rules that have never been eradicated from military thinking. These may help explain why so many soldiers seem uneasy about our plans for Iraq, while Field Marshalls Clinton and Blair are so gung-ho. Clausewitz On War is not an easy text. It is likely that most of the military caste forced to study it stare longingly out of the window, anxious to get outside and practise killing.

But some of his principles are very stark. "The aim of all action in war is to disarm the enemy." "The three general objects of war: the military power must be destroyed... the country must be conquered... the war cannot be considered at an end as long as the will of the enemy is not subdued also." In other

words, had he been advising President Bush in 1991, he would have told him he was crazy not to go on to Baghdad when he had the chance. Clausewitz was especially stern on any hint of squeamishness: "Philanthropists may easily imagine there is a skillful method of disarming without causing great bloodshed... it is an error that must be eradicated: for in such dangerous things as war, the errors which proceed from a spirit of benevolence are the worst."

He goes on: "Let us not hear of generals who conquer without bloodshed. If bloody slaughter is a horrible sight, then that is a ground for paying more respect to war, not for making the sword by degrees from feelings of humanity, until someone steps in with one that is sharp and lops off the arm from our body." I think that means he would now be advising that the proposed action was very crazy indeed. We are proposing to bomb Iraq for the following reasons: 1) To teach this wicked leader to do what we tell him in future. 2) To destroy the said leader, his immediate entourage, and a few vials of poison (though the whereabouts of all these are unknown) without hurting his benighted people. 3) To protect said people from said leader. 4) To discourage him from using the poison on anyone.

It is not just Clausewitz who might have reservations about the efficacy of this strategy. Every government in the world, except the US, Britain and our gallant Anzac allies, has been saying the same thing.

with customary British reverence for history, plans allow executive houses on the site of the Battle of Tewkesbury (1471). This was the decisive encounter of the Wars of the Roses, where Edward IV destroyed the Lancastrians. English Heritage talks of desecration. Tewkesbury councilors insist this is not the main battlefield. In my head, a loud bell rings. The new A14 road runs from the M6 across Northamptonshire and slap through the site of the Battle of Naseby (1645), the decisive encounter of the Civil War.

Or not. At the public enquiry 10 years ago, experts marched in and lambasted

Presumably, I would have been hanged

the plan in 'turn. Asked to identify the battlefield, each one came up with a different answer. The inspector was exasperated and let the road be built. I expect Charles I talked about "precision bombing".

THANK YOU for your response to last week's piece on conditions in Cattle Class on aeroplanes. I believe this story has got legs (unlike the passengers, according to the airlines).

I had a ticket marked "OK". I was then told I did not exist in the computer and sent away. So were about a dozen others: the flight had been badly overbooked.

I got on the plane, mainly by being so bad-tempered that no one wanted me in the terminal. A moment longer than necessary. Travellers Advisory: when in trouble, judge whether to be exceptionally charming or exceptionally obnoxious. Don't shilly-shally between the two.

It then took half an hour to get through security. This appears not to be unusual in Terminal Three. It is fat-headed management because no one has time to go to the duty-free shops.

Ten cricket fans failed to make it on to my flight. They rechristened themselves The Toronto Ten, because that's where they spent the night. They arrived 24 hours late and missed the first day's cricket. The ensuing litigation promises to be interesting. "They've messed, with the wrong people," said one. "We've got three doctors and one QC."

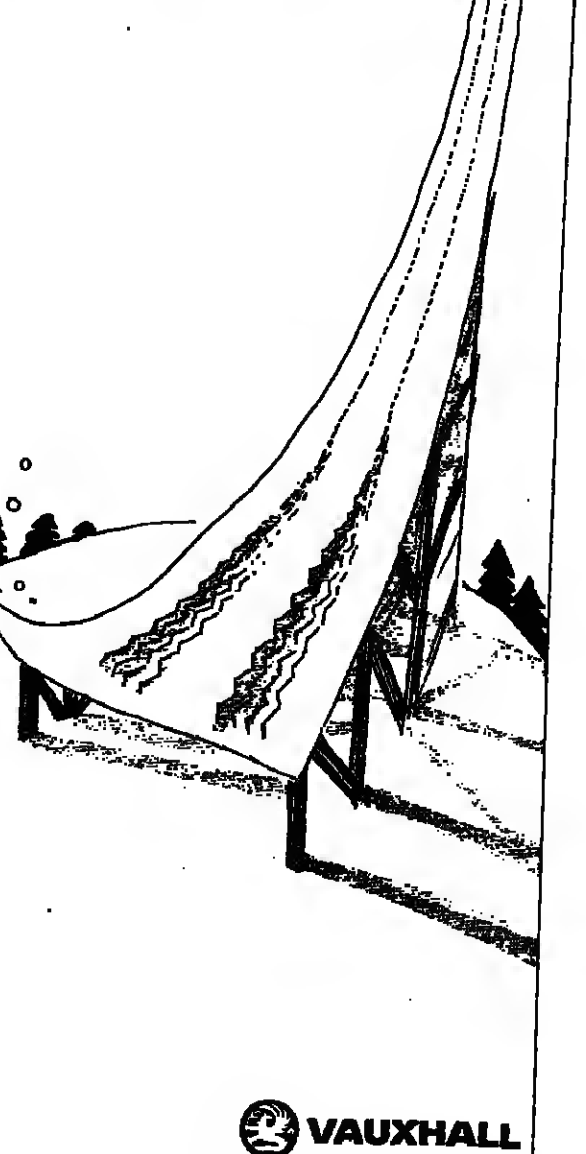
On the plane back, BWIA went for the super-squeeze: I reckon anyone under 4ft 8in would have been uncomfortable.

I was seated behind a man who reclined his seat the whole way immediately after take-off and in front of an elderly Yorkshire hooligan who refused to let me lean back even a millimetre, enforcing this by digging his bony knees into my seat. Presumably, Trinidad law applied and, had I murdered him, I would have been hanged.

FRONTERA SKI-NET

IN-DEPTH SKI REPORTS

www.vauxhall.co.uk/ski



special interest, are not the only ones worthy of support. Novelists, no doubt, will make their claim, as will poets, classical musicians and singers, dancers, actors, sculptors, conceptual performance and figurative artists, potters, synchronised swimmers and avant garde circus performers. We must not be elitist about this: if Chumbawamba deserves our support, so, surely, do craft enthusiasts: from carpenters to weavers, macramé quilters, knitters, patchwork artists, fancy cake-icers, ship-in-a-bottle inserters and men who make models of St Paul's Cathedral out of lollipop sticks. Can any argument be found for excluding Morris dancers of all kinds, assuming they wish to become professional? Amateur actors may argue that they "rest" in just the same way as proper ones — only for longer. Why should Sunday painters be restricted to one day a week?

ONCE the deserving categories have been established, some decisions may have to be made about productivity and length of benefit. Or perhaps not: it is eight years — the time it took to nurture the Longpigs — long enough? Many artists are late-flowering, writers can be blocked for years, and the welfare state protects us all, artists included, from cradle to grave. Yet, we must admit, cocooning would be artists was never part of Beveridge's Comprehensive Scheme of Social Insurance. It was not a way of "giving to everybody something for nothing", but "contributions in return for benefits".

Music, certainly, is a contribution, yet McGee has yet to prove that it would suffer in any way if young people were expected to take jobs. He mentions, as if to appal us, the nightmare prospect of future Gallaghers "doing plumbing" — but would this be any more inappropriate than Trollope's labours at the Post Office, TS Eliot's in a bank, Wallace Stevens's at the Harcourt Accidents, or AE Housman's at the patent office? For 10 years, until he was appointed Professor of Latin at University College London, Housman assessed applications for products such as "Clister-buck's Chemical Glacet Cleaner", and "Dr. Scott's Electric Corset" — "A great boon to delicate ladies!" In the evenings, he went to the British Museum, to work on the classics.

Larkin came to enjoy his day job and even, as we know, managed to write a few poems. "Librarian", Andrew Motion reports, is what Larkin put in Who's Who, in the belief that "a man is what he is paid for". How many of McGee's protégés would ever get a chance to find out?

Headhunters take their scalps

NatWest knives draw blood

Roger Cowe and Mark Milner

NATWEST Bank yesterday ended months of speculation by announcing a board shake-up which is aimed at restoring the bank's credibility after a succession of catastrophes.

But the changes leave in place for the time being the top duo of chairman Lord Alexander and chief executive Derek Wanless.

Lord Blyth, Boots deputy

chairman and chief executive, has been appointed as a non-executive director and is expected to take over from Lord Alexander when he retires next year. Two other non-executives are being brought on board while two others are leaving.

The Bank of England is understood to have made it clear to NatWest over recent months that it was concerned not only by growing rifts within the board but also by the fact that the bank was at risk of losing the market's confidence.

NatWest had also come under sustained criticism over the past year in the City for the abandoned strategy of trying to build a global investment bank and for failing to put a credible alternative plan in place. Concerns were exacerbated by the £90 million loss on derivatives by a rogue trader.

Lord Blyth said last night that he had no preconceptions about his new role. "It's a big, complicated organisation and I won't make any judgments until I get there," he said.

NatWest said he and other non-executives had been chosen, after a nine-month search by headhunters, because of their wide experience.

"James Blyth has very wide business experience and is regarded as one of the leading figures in the retail industry," Lord Alexander said.

Lord Blyth will join the board in April, along with former Lloyd's insurance market chairman Sir David Rowland and Anthony Habgood, currently chairman of Buzzi, a specialist paper, plastics and printing company.

NatWest also announced the departure of Sir John Banham, the former director

Spirited Blyth put Boots on the map

Reputations

Warwickshire lord has healed the retail group's split personality but he's used to tough jobs, says ROGER COWE

LORD Blyth has been the force behind the transformation of Boots over the past decade, but made his reputation earlier as a tough marketing man.

His career began in the food industry, including a spell at one of the world's great marketing "universities" Mars, where he learned the basics of consumer marketing, which he has applied with great success as chief executive of Boots.

But his spell at Mars lasted only a few years in the early 1970s and the transition from consumer marketing into defence came through running the aerospace business of Lucas, given at the time by a long-running industrial dispute.

This led to a trade union "alternative" plan aimed at converting the weapons activities to civilian use.

Lord Blyth, who will be 58 in May, had little truck with such effrontery. His non-sense style leaves little room for negotiating with unions over anything other than pay.

Such attributes made him the ideal candidate to shake up the Ministry of Defence's procurement operation when Mrs Thatcher wanted to drive some commercial thinking into Whitehall in the early 1980s. And to work on securing the enormous Al Yamamah weapons contract with Saudi Arabia.

to the poisoned chalice of advising Mrs Thatcher's successor on the Citizen's Charter. Lord Blyth was chairman of the advisory panel on the ill-fated Charter from its inception in 1991 until the General Election last year.

But he is the kind of man to welcome tough assignments, which explains why he went from the MoD to Plessey in 1985.

The electronics group was run by Sir John Clark, a fierce autocrat, who brooked no opposition, and Lord Blyth faced an insuperable task in shaking up the company against Sir John's obstinacy.

He left after fighting off a takeover bid from GEC, but before the electrical giant came back to mount a joint takeover of Plessey with Siemens in 1987.

Boots offered Blyth a route back into the consumer world. The long-established high-street chemist group was struggling from a heritage which left it as half a retailer and half a drug company. The group had been dominated by chemists. That had hampered its effectiveness as a retailer, while it was becoming clear that it was too small to compete effectively in a world where drug companies were becoming global giants.

Lord Blyth has healed the group's split personality, while it was becoming clear that it was too small to compete effectively in a world where drug companies were becoming global giants.

Only one was successful in financial terms, but both were crucial in putting Boots very firmly in the retail camp.



Boots' challenge was big enough to tempt Lord Blyth back to the consumer world after difficult spells at the MoD and Plessey

The first deal was a disastrous takeover of retailer, Ward White. This 1980s phenomenon had been built up through acquisitions, but when Boots opened the books after the £200 million takeover, it found the businesses less attractive than they looked.

The goal had been to give Boots a foothold in the fast-growing out-of-town retail market, to complement its dominant position on the high street. Ward White offered Payless, one of a quartet of DIY operators which had benefited from the 1980s housing boom.

Payless had proved an expensive failure, even after Blyth engineered a deal with W H Smith to merge it under the Do It All name. Even with this year's benign environment, Do It

All (now wholly owned by Boots) has struggled. Other Ward White companies have been similarly disappointing, although Boots has managed to sell the Fada/Homestyle High Street DIY chains. Only Halfords has been a useful addition to Boots' portfolio.

The group abandoned a home-grown attempt to build an out-of-town business when it sold Children's World to Storehouse. Out-of-town strategy has proved questionable, given the continuing success of Boots The Chemist.

But the takeover of Ward White did make it clear that Blyth saw Boots' future as a retailer rather than a drug company. That has been emphasised by the sale of the group's pharmaceutical arm to the German

BASF group in 1994. That deal came after the company had to abandon development in 1993 of its last great drug hope—the heart treatment Manoplas, then it was on the verge of being launched. It left the pharmaceutical operation in an untenable position.

Lord Blyth has made one other mark on the business, which could be highly relevant to NatWest. That is the repayment of cash to shareholders through a series of buy-backs and special dividends.

Stung by the failure of his one big acquisition, the boots boss has since opted for caution. Faced with the flood of cash from the high-street chain, he has opted not to spend money on other acquisitions, but to leave shareholders the choice.

With NatWest facing a similar dilemma over merger or acquisition, the bank's shareholders might be rubbing their hands in anticipation. Whether customers can look forward to Boots-style service is another matter.

Lord Blyth, who was given a peerage two years ago, has been married for 30 years and apart from his family is also devoted to Scotland.

His working life has been spent down south after graduating from Glasgow university, but he remains a fierce patriot and delights in telling stories against the English.

His title as Lord Blyth of Rivington refers to the Warwickshire village where he has a sizeable estate.

IN: Sir David Rowland

Sir David Rowland has spent the bulk of his working life in the insurance industry working for Willis Faber and then the Sedgwick group and was the first full-time chairman of Lloyd's, the London insurance market.

During his five years at Lloyd's, Sir David was instrumental in drawing up the framework for the settlement of the legal row between Lloyd's Names—the rich individuals who pledged their wealth as backing for insurance contracts—and the Lloyd's authorities. He had earlier

chaired the task force which called for big changes in the structure of the insurance market.

A graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, Sir David, who was knighted in last year's New Year's honours list, is now the president of Templeton College, Oxford, which specialises in management studies.

IN: Anthony Habgood

JOINING Sir David on the NatWest board will be Anthony Habgood—a 51-year-old Cambridge economics graduate with a degree in industrial administration from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

Mr Habgood began his working life with the management consulting group Boston Consulting, in 1970.

During the mid-1980s Mr Habgood joined Tootal group and was chief executive when the group was taken over by Coats

Vivella in 1991. He then became chief executive of the industrial group Buzzi, with

interests in paper, plastics and printing, and has been its executive chairman since 1996.

Mr Habgood is also a non-executive director of the electricity generator, PowerGen, and Schroder Ventures International.

OUT: Sir Desmond Pitcher

THE earliest departure from NatWest's board is that of Sir Desmond Pitcher, who resigned with immediate effect.

It will be the first of two boardroom departures in quick succession for Sir Desmond. He steps down as chairman of Warrington-based United Utilities, the North West Water/Norweb group, next month.

Sir Desmond, who has a reputation as a bluff and sometimes controversial northerner, joined the board of NatWest in 1993 and had

earlier been a member of the bank's northern regional advisory board.

He was formerly group chief executive of the Littlewoods Organisation and managing director of Plessey Telecommunications and Office Systems, and of British Leyland's truck and bus division.

OUT: Sir John Banham

ALSO going is Sir John Banham, the 57-year-old former director-general of the Campaign for British Industry and controller of the Audit Commission, the local government spending watchdog.

He also served as chairman of the Local Government Commission for England which was set up by the Conservatives to review the structure of municipal authorities.

A former director of the international management consultants McKinsey, Sir

John holds a number of boardroom posts in the City, including chairing the boards of Tarmac and

Kingfisher, the parent company of retailers Woolworth, Comet and B&Q.

He was appointed to the NatWest board in 1992 and will stand down in the middle of April.

Paying court to shrewd strokes by Siemens' chief

Euro Eye

may risk losing a contract, but never losing at tennis.

If tennis is Mr von Pierer's first love, politics has never been far behind. For many years he was a local councillor and in the mid-1970s came within a whisker of making it a full-time career. He failed by only one vote to win the nomination for a Bavarian constituency.

"That was the reason I had to stay at Siemens. So I know it is easier to become chief executive of Siemens than it is to become a member of the German parliament."

He might have enjoyed a quieter life in Bonn. Huge electrical and electronic engineering groups such as Siemens have products ranging from semiconductors to power stations — are seldom out of the spotlight.

Colleagues say Mr von Pierer prefers to keep a low profile. He has always shared centre stage with his finance director, Karl-Hermann Baumann, although the latter is now standing down as an executive director.

Siemens has always been different because the Siemens family were always modest —

successful but very modest." Critics might argue that Siemens has a fair bit to be modest about. The days are gone when the company was jokingly referred to as a bank with an engineering company attached, because it made most of its profits from managing its cash mountain. But Siemens' own target of a 15 per cent return on equity remains stubbornly distant. Last year, the figure was 9.44 per cent.

Mr von Pierer is unwavering in his belief that Siemens will reach the goal he has set and says bluntly that it needs to be more profitable.

Part of the thinking is driven by the recent increase in emphasis in Germany on shareholder value. The role of banks, the traditional suppliers of finance to German industry, is changing. Institutional investors, including foreign funds with very different investment approaches, have grown in importance.

Mr von Pierer acknowledges that he has to pay attention to what the investment community thinks about the Siemens performance.

But why? The arguments for shareholder value are effectively linked to the share price. Look after investors, and the share price will look after itself. Getting it right means that companies can tap the market for money or use highly-rated paper to take over the less well-regarded. Get it wrong, and chief managers can find themselves on the wrong end of a hostile takeover bid.

Yet Siemens is hardly likely to fall victim to a predator and, okay, argues Mr von Pierer, it may not need to go

cap in hand to investors but if the need ever arose, then it could hardly expect a warm welcome if it had a history of giving its shareholders the cold shoulder.

There are also two other reasons. The 15 per cent figure is not aimed only at investors. It is meant to concentrate minds within the company, too.

But the third reason is perhaps the most important. Siemens faces competition on a global scale; markets change fast and it needs to deliver

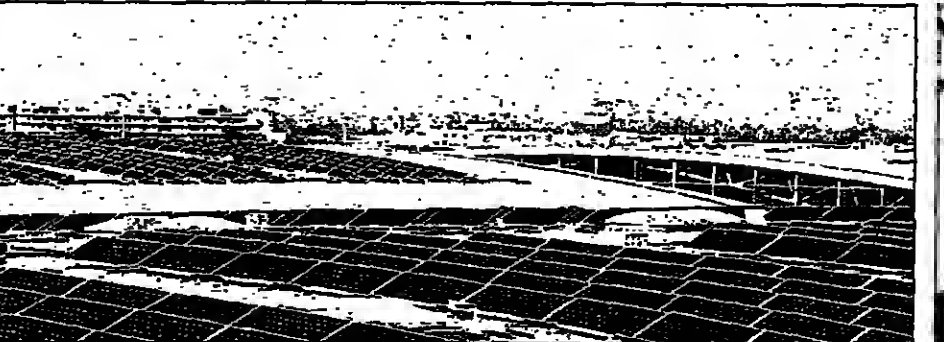
more products more rapidly. When he took over at Siemens in 1992, he faced a tricky inheritance. In sales terms, the company had more than doubled its size in the previous decade and there was the need to consolidate expansion in the US and Germany.

There was also the question of corporate culture. "Siemens was like a huge family. It had a special environment with lots of hierarchical levels," said Mr Pierer. He has made some progress

and productivity has improved, from around 3 per cent to more than 9 per cent last year. But Siemens has cut more than 60,000 jobs in Germany during recent years.

Mr von Pierer is also concerned about Siemens not recruiting enough apprentices and about the fall-off in the number of Germans studying engineering. But he is proud of the fact that Siemens has been able to make the changes through persuasion.

The snag is that as Siemens



Von Pierer (right) favours solar power like this unit built by Siemens to supply the Munich Trade Fair



PHOTOGRAPH BY EPA

Mark Milner

IN HIS younger days Heinrich von Pierer, the chief executive of the German industrial conglomerate Siemens, was the youth tennis champion of Bavaria.

These days, Mr von Pierer's appearances on court are limited, but the skills are still useful. On a recent trip to China, he found himself playing mixed doubles against one of the country's most senior political leaders.

The von Pierer pairing lost but the Siemens boss bridges at the suggestion that the result was influenced by commercial considerations. "I

Rank profits edge boom in video dup

Leisure group poised to beat Marriott in £2bn battle for four-star chain

Bass set to win hotels contest

Dan Atkinson

BASS, the brewing and leisure conglomerate, was last night poised to win the £2-billion bidding battle for the 212-strong Inter-Continental hotel chain.

If Bass outbids rival Marriott, it will control an international chain of nearly 3,500 hotels, far and away the world's biggest branded hotel group.

No announcement was made during London trading, but it was thought likely that Inter's owners — the Japanese Saison group — would unveil the auction winner today.

Saison's financial year concludes at the end of February and it is believed the indebted group needs to have something arranged on the Inter sale by then. The company, which is controlled by the secretive and occasionally feuding Tsutsumi family, has taken a battering in the Far Eastern meltdown, as have many other big commercial concerns.

While Bass refused to comment last night, the company has made no secret of its desire to expand its hotels division.

One analyst noted last night that Inter would make a logical fit with Bass's Crowne Plaza brand. Both are four-star, with Crowne strong in the Americas and Inter well represented in the Far East, where Bass is concentrating its ambitions.

Final bids were thought to be due yesterday, with Bass and Marriott — the Washington DC-based chain — the hot favourites. Two other bidders — the Ladbroke group and Patriot American Hospitality, based in Dallas — have already withdrawn.

Saison wants an all-cash

offer, and Bass, which has substantial cash reserves of its own, is thought to have put together a six-bank consortium to finance the deal. Should Bass emerge victorious, the Inter brand would return to British ownership 10 years after Saison bought it from Grand Metropolitan (now part of Diageo).

Shares in Bass slipped 26p to 960p yesterday as rumours strengthened that it was about to shake hands on the deal with Saison. There have been suggestions that Bass may be tempted to overpay for Inter, although it has also been suggested that Bass's "plan B" should the Inter deal fall through, is to spend some of its cash pile on the 1,000-pub Grand Pub Company, owned by Japan's Nomura bank.

Disposal of the Inter brand is the latest twist in the saga of the Tsutsumi family, one of the wealthiest in the world. The combine that owns the Inter, along with supermarkets, department stores and credit cards, is headed by Seiji Tsutsumi, who feuded for a decade until 1993 with his half-brother Yoshiaki, estimated at one time to be worth at least \$5 billion, who runs the Seibu railway and property group. He is the wealthiest man in Japan and his interests also include amusement parks and the Seibu Lions baseball team.

Their father, Yasujiro, was a politician with a string of wives and mistresses. It was he who built up the land holdings and railways interests.

Seiji's purchase of the Inter-Continental Hotels was seen at the time as a bold attempt to match his half-brother's commercial empire. But it drained cash from the Saison group, which then had to weather the storms of the Japanese property and retail slump.



One of the 212-strong chain of Inter-Continental hotels which is up for grabs

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN GOODMAN

Clinton alive to Asian calamity



Alex Brummer

THE intensity with which the Clinton Administration is battling economic meltdown in Asia almost matches the fervour with which it has taken on Saddam. President Clinton and his Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, along with his team, have never lost sight of the fact that they were elected to do a job on the US economy and are determined that the achievements of strong growth, low unemployment and a shrunken budget deficit are not thrown away in the final stretch.

To understand why the US has made resolution of the Asian crisis such a priority and why it will be the dominant theme of this weekend's Group of Seven gatherings in London, one has to recognise the seriousness of what occurred last autumn and what is still going on in Japan and Indonesia.

Despite the attempts of central bankers such as Hans Tietmeyer of the Bundesbank to present a calm face after the regular monthly sessions at the Bank for International Settlements in Basel, the reality is much more disturbing.

Many senior financial officials feel the crisis in the Far East last year was potentially the most dangerous economic shock in the post-second world war era. This might appear an unfounded, apocalyptic vision, but when South Korea effectively declared itself bankrupt and the deep seated problems of the Japanese financial system were revealed with the Yamaichi collapse, the crevices were there for all to see.

Since then the whole focus has been on covering them up. In some respects the coverage has been almost too successful. As Asia temporarily disappeared off the screens of traders in London and New York, equity prices scaled record heights, indicating a degree of unwarranted and almost certainly unjustified recovery.

better is needed. This has been tried at the BIS where a second Group of Seven of the larger emerging market economies has been added to the G7 countries plus smaller Europeans including Belgium, Holland and Sweden.

Now the US is moving in much the same direction. Because it cannot shrink the European presence too much (history and pride) it is having to add numbers, producing a new Group of 22.

The deputies (senior financial officials) have met in Washington in the last week and the finance ministers themselves intend to come together in the fringes of the spring gatherings of the IMF/World Bank — with Asia the main topic of interest.

By all accounts the G22, as it may become, is not a one-off. The convenor, deputy US Treasury Secretary Larry Summers — the point person on the Asian crisis — has commissioned work from the group, suggesting it is about to join the broadening fabric of forums. Ideally, it might displace the European dominated G10, even better if the numbers of Europeans on the G22 could be weeded down to become more manageable.

Aside from some broad statements of support for the IMF's strategy at today's Lancaster House meeting, there are some important practicalities which the G7 needs to come to grips with.

Japan has to be encouraged to tackle ruthlessly the structural and liquidity problems of its banking system; this means dismembering those banks with unsupportable debt levels and using fiscal policy to lubricate the switch.

THE word "transparency" will be on everyone's lips in London, particularly Chancellor Gordon Brown who claimed ownership of it in Hong Kong. But it is not so much transparency as the quality of the information that is important. It has become clear in Asia that the official statistics, which appeared to indicate that short-term lending was not a problem, were misleading.

Almost every five-year loan agreement in the region included a downgrade let-out clause; if the quality of a country's credit were downgraded by a major rating agency then the commercial banks were able to pull out their money. Five-year loans suddenly became short-term credits, worsening the situation. Banking regulators are working on placing limits on the real short-term debt profile of emerging market economies.

The immediate concern is to prevent a new escalation in the Asian crisis by supporting the IMF in negotiations with the Suharto regime in Jakarta. Indonesia is the biggest loser as a result of the Asian crisis. Its equity markets have fallen 81.2 per cent and the rupiah 73.5 per cent since July. The currency board idea is seen as a device whereby the ruling family in Indonesia can convert their own holdings into dollars and then devalue once they have exited.

The IMF rightly has thrust itself into a thorny political situation and plainly needs the support of individual G7 countries if it is to win through. But it is a delicate balance. If the Indonesia programme were now to fail, a second wave of deposit withdrawals and uncertainty could cascade through the region and globally. The increasingly clear picture of the FTSE, Dow Jones and other equity markets will seem even more misplaced.

Pre-paid water meters banned

Nicholas Bannister, Chief Business Correspondent

A HIGH technology method of paying for water was outlawed yesterday by a High Court judge because people who got into difficulty could be disconnected automatically.

Water companies, backed by the industry regulator Ofwat, have been keen for unreliable payers to use pre-paid electronic smart cards to get their water.

The householder pays for the water in advance by "charging" the card, which contains a computer chip, at a post office. Slipping the card into a slot at home releases the amount of water that has been bought. But when this is used up, and warning messages are ignored, the water supply dries up.

Mr Justice Harrison said the card payment system was unlawful because it did not comply with the statutory code of practice for the water industry, which is designed to protect poor families and vulnerable people who get into payment difficulties.

Water companies have installed the pre-paid smart card system in about 33,000 homes across the country.

The test case, an application for a judicial review, was initiated by six local authorities — Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham city councils, Lancashire county council and Tameside and Oldham

metropolitan borough councils — and opposed by Ofwat and water companies Severn Trent and North West Water.

The councils argued that widespread use of the payment system would lead to an increase in disconnections and that the regulator should ban them.

Theresa Stewart, the leader of Birmingham city council, said yesterday: "We have always felt that it was wrong for the director general [of Ofwat] to allow water companies to install these devices and disconnect households who cannot afford to pay their bill. It simply did not take into account the need to respect the current customer safeguards that the Bill of Rights in place or consider the very real public health risks which would follow widespread installations."

Ofwat said it was disappointed that the judge's decision would prevent people from benefiting from the system. A spokeswoman said: "This method of payment is being considered in the Government's review of charging for water and the decision will inform the debate."

A spokesman for Severn Trent, which launched a pilot for the pre-payment system in 1992, said its 1,600 customers using the system would have conventional payment systems restored "at the earliest opportunity". "We are discussing with them where we go from here but ultimately it is up to Ofwat whether to appeal," she said.

Branson on track without extension

Nicholas Bannister, Chief Business Correspondent

VIRGIN Rail has abandoned an attempt to extend part of its West Coast franchise because the proposal threatened to delay a £600 million scheme to improve journey times by 2005.

Richard Branson's controversial rail company last year asked for the right to run trains between London and Manchester for 15 years beyond 2012, when its franchise for the whole London-to-Glasgow line expires.

It wanted the extra revenue

to help fund additional investment to increase speeds from 125mph to 140mph. The £600 million project, which has been put to the rail regulator for approval, was to be jointly financed by a revenue-sharing scheme between Virgin and Railtrack.

But a Virgin spokesman said yesterday that the company had withdrawn the request for the extension because it feared it would result in "confusion and discussion" which would delay the investment programme.

"We have done more analysis on this and found that we can go ahead without

recourse to this application," he said. "We and Railtrack are confident that there is another solution."

He said Virgin had originally asked for the extension because Railtrack "wanted a comfort that there would be a revenue stream beyond the end of the franchise". Virgin and Railtrack are continuing with their revenue-sharing arrangement to fund the investment, but the spokesman refused to say how Virgin planned to satisfy Railtrack's concerns.

Railtrack is already committed to spending £1.5 billion upgrading the West Coast line

from London to Glasgow to take tilting trains which will cut journey times from 2002. London to Manchester, for example, is expected to take about two hours, compared with the scheduled two and a half hours at present, while London to Birmingham will come down from 1 hour 40 minutes to one and a quarter hours.

However, the additional £600 million investment proposed by Railtrack and Virgin should reduce journey times still further from 2005. London to Manchester is forecast to take one and three-quarter hours and London to Birmingham about an hour.

Virgin insists group is 'as healthy as ever'

Roger Cowe

VIRGIN reacted angrily yesterday to suggestions that the private group was facing financial turbulence.

A spokesman said Richard Branson's empire was financially sound. "The Virgin group of companies is as healthy, and the majority of its companies as profitable, as they have ever been," he said. "If you look at all the major elements in the Virgin group, they are doing very well."

He was responding to a detailed analysis of the hundreds of companies in the Virgin network, which suggested some were losing money and the brand under threat.

The examination of the group, published in The Econ-

omist, shows that the airline, Virgin Atlantic, is the only business contributing substantial profits. Together with a stake in Virgin Express, the

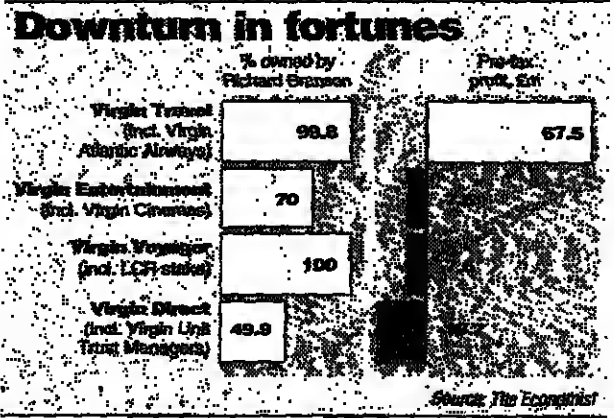
cut-price European airline which is now a public company, it made £45 million pre-tax profits. But Mr Branson's wholly-owned operations out-

sided the travel business lost \$34 million last year, while his share of losses in joint ventures such as the railways was a further £15 million. The graphic shows a few key sectors of the empire.

Virgin said conventional financial analysis was inappropriate to the private empire, where cash was ploughed back into new ventures rather than used in the interest of outside shareholders.

Losses were bound to occur in the many ventures still in the development phase.

Virgin said most of its losses-makers were improving their performance, as was the West Coast main line. But increasingly, observers have questioned whether Mr Branson has extended his empire too far and lost too much control over use of the Virgin brand.



Rank profits edge up after boom in video duplication

Roger Cowe

LEISURE group Rank said yesterday there was a boom in video duplication on the back of such film successes as the Lost World.

The last quarter 1997 saw duplication volumes soar by almost half to leave total volumes for the year 14 per cent ahead of 1996. Profits were the same as the previous year, however, after difficulties in earlier quarters.

The group's profit edged ahead in a year when the figures are confused by Rank's sale of its stake in Xerox, and by heavy reorganisation costs in 1996.

Headline profits soared to

£260 million because of those distortions, but on a comparable basis the operating profit from continuing operations was 10 per cent ahead.

The troubled group's leisure division improved profits by 16 per cent to £107 million, with much of the improvement coming from the group's Odeon cinemas, where admissions rose 34 per cent.

The Hard Rock cafe chain has seen surging revenues, but that has not been reflected in profits.

Hard Rock profits, at £47 million, were 2 per cent up on 1996.

Profits at Rank's holiday division rose 9 per cent to £73 million.

Franco-German row clouds G7

Blair urged to intervene, report Mark Atkinson and Larry Elliott

TONY Blair was last night urged to broker a deal in the row over the first head of the European Central Bank as a series of disputes threatened to overshadow today's summit meeting of G7 finance ministers and central bank governors.

UK Treasury sources were anxious to keep the Franco-German spat off the formal agenda for today's talks, which are supposed to focus on the Asian financial crisis and the state of the world economy.

However, there is growing pressure on Britain to use its presidency of the European Union to mediate between the candidacies of Dutchman Wim Duisenberg, supported by Germany, and France's central bank governor, Jean-Claude Trichet.

Ingo Friedrich, deputy chairman of the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU) party and an ally of German Finance Minister Theo Waigel, told reporters in Bonn it was "indeed up to Tony Blair to mediate."

"He has said he is personally interested in the success of economic and monetary union. I presume that Tony Blair will be a fair partner and mediator in this question," he said.

Mr Waigel, who is attending today's talks, is certain to raise the issue with his fellow finance ministers on the fringes of the discussions at Lancaster House in London.

Germany was also embroiled in a separate argument over Britain last night over debt relief for the 20 poorest nations in Africa. German officials were last night trying to remove from the draft communiqué a call by Chancellor Gordon Brown to commit the G7 to accelerate the programme so that it embraces all eligible countries by the year 2000.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS			
Australia 2.38	France 6.97	Italy 2.80	Singapore 2.53
Austria 2.38	Germany 2.87	Japan 7.28	South Africa 7.28
Belgium 50.82	Greece 48.89	Netherlands 3.25	Spain 24.23
Canada 2.27	Hong Kong 12.33	New Zealand 2.74	Sweden 12.93
Cyprus 0.85	India 63.55	Norway 12.08	Switzerland 2.38
Denmark 11.11	Ireland 1.16	Portugal 256.80	Turkey 358.16
Finland 8.87	Israel 5.85	Saudi Arabia 6.04	USA 1.032

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

Sky boxes with digital TV rival

Celia Weston

BITISH Digital Broadcasting was last night threatened with possible legal action by BSkyB after it announced that the Franco-German partnership Seca had been chosen to supply the set-top boxes which consumers will need to receive its digital TV services.

However, BDB said it had no intention of launching a "box war" and would work closely with BSkyB to design an adaptor that would allow the Seca box to be used also to receive digital satellite signals.

Seca's success comes at the expense of rival supplier News Datacom System, a subsidiary of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, which also has a 40 per cent stake in BSkyB.

BDB, a partnership between Carlton Communications and the Granada Group, said last night that it was convinced it would be possible to invent a low-cost adaptor

which would allow BDB customers using the Seca set-top box to also buy in BSkyB services. Each box, which acts as an electronic turnstile allowing only viewers who have subscribed to pay-TV services to watch them, is expected to cost up to £200.

But BSkyB called into question the so-called inter-operability of the two systems. Mark Booth, BSkyB's chief executive, said he did not believe it would be possible. "We are committed to inter-operability and BDB has both a regulatory and a contractual commitment to ensure their box is compatible with ours," he said.

Mr Booth warned that if it became apparent that the Seca set-top box could not be adapted to make it inter-operable, legal action would be considered. BDB's contractual obligation to use compatible systems is understood to arise from the deal last year under which BSkyB was required by Ofcom, the industry regulator, to rescind its stake in BDB.

FinanceGuardian

Eat, sleep and be photographed

Summits are an excuse for a snooze, says LARRY ELLIOTT

FORGET the Glorious Twelfth. Forget Ladies' Day at Ascot. For the dedicated band of politicians, bankers, diplomats, assorted spin-doctors and flunkies who make up the world's elite band of summiters, today is the start of the Season.

The annual rigmarole begins with a meeting of G7 finance ministers and central bank governors amid the pomp of London's Lancaster House and will rumble on until the autumn.

In the same way as it would be social death for a member of the ruling class to miss the Henley Regatta, with the exception of chairman of the United States Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, so will the highest ranks of the global financial establishment ensure they are on parade today. German finance minister Theo Waigel will be gossiping with his peers about the financial meltdown's impact and Banque de France chief Jean-Claude Trichet will be showing what a good candidate he would be for first president of the European Central Bank.

Chancellor Gordon Brown and the Bank of England's Eddie George will be the hosts. Morning dress and top hats will not be needed, but any aide without a phone or pager will appear underdressed.

Today is just the start. This evening, the bank governors will be waving off as the G7 expands — with the arrival of the Russian delegation — to what will be the G8 Jobs Summit. There will be summits on monetary union, the world economy, for the nations of the Pacific, North and South

America and for the Commonwealth. Participants have yet to be offered counselling for summit fatigue, but it may only be a matter of time.

But just as the Season is really just an excuse for the rich and famous to consume quantities of Pimm's, so summits have become a way for politicians to enjoy time away from their problems, safe in the knowledge that they will get their pictures in the papers but that nothing significant will happen.

This is perhaps over-cynical. Jaw-jaw will always be better than war-war, and there have been summits which have mattered. The Maastricht opt-out negotiated by John Major for Britain was, depending on your point of view, the greatest feat of diplomacy since those of Austria's 19th-century state chancellor, Metternich, or the biggest sell-out since Munich. But the meetings of the G7 have become increasingly soporific. It has been five years since the heads of government got-together managed anything of significance, and this year's G8 summit in Birmingham will see an attempt to return to the original 1975 concept of a "fireside chat".

SUMMITRY in the 1970s had a purpose. Richard Nixon and Leonid Brezhnev were trying to negotiate arms agreements, and the dire impact on the West of the oil-price shock of 1973 lay behind that first World Economic Summit in France, two years later.

The term was coined by Winston Churchill at the height of the Cold War in



Field of the Cloth of Gold, by 19th-century artist Gilbert

1950. "The idea appeals to me of a supreme effort to bridge the gap between the two worlds," he told an Edinburgh audience. "A parley at the summit." But the essence of summitry goes back to the time when an age of commerce was emerging from an age of conquest. No evidence has yet emerged to suggest that Attila the Hun or Genghis Khan were very keen on settling disputes around the conference table.

But by the 18th century, when kings were finding it harder to raise money for wars, summitry began to develop. Apart from his famous encounter with Francis I of France at the Field of the Cloth of Gold near Calais in 1520, Henry VIII met Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, twice in the same year — in France and in England. Just as today, protocol and status were crucial. MS Anderson, in his book on the rise of modern diplomacy, said of the Field of the Cloth of Gold:

"Implicit in such ceremonies was very often a powerful element of competition, a wish to assert the greatness of a ruler against his rivals and a determination to resist any slight which they might offer to his standing or reputation. The anxiety of both sides over such things as the exact placing of the lists in which tilting was to take place, the order and position in which the shields of Henry and Francis were to be hung on the 'Tree of Honour', and the need for the size of their retinues and bodyguards to be exactly the same when they met shows these preoccupations at their most intense."

Little has changed. The size of the motorcade matters, and each country wants to see its national flag fluttering proudly outside.

Britain is doing its best to keep a tight rein on the costs of the summits it will host in London, Cardiff and York over the coming months. But even the most lavish of the

modern affairs pales into insignificance compared with the summits of yesteryear.

The two days spent in London would, for the participants at the Congress of Vienna in 1814, for example, have barely been time enough to unpack. Bill Clinton may have run into some publicity problems with his haircut in Airforce One, but he was hardly in the same league as French diplomat Talleyrand, who brought an entire retinue of hairdressers with him to the talks, which started in November 1814 and lasted until June 1815.

Diplomats were in no particular hurry, and hard bargaining on Lombardy's fate was interspersed with hunts, balls and banquets. Hunting and dancing are no longer part of the summit agenda, but feasting is still a big part of the package.

One reason why modern summits have tended to be bland is that, since the collapse of communism, the participants are on the same side — in theory. But meaningful reform is still possible. Three things need to be done.

First, there should be fewer summits. Second, they should be devoted to one issue, rather than a mélange of agendas. Third, politicians should take out some of the pomp and grandeur so that there is a chance of getting something done.

Will anything happen this weekend? Everybody will agree on the need to remain vigilant after the Asian crisis, and there will be some discussion of the need to add a social dimension to economic reform in countries worst affected by the turbulence. But radical ideas such as a tax on foreign-exchange dealing will not be on the agenda. In the G7, financial and monetary orthodoxy rules.

The Jobs Summit is also unlikely to be a great meeting of minds, despite the Chancellor's aim of finding a third way between the deregulated US model and the more protected labour markets of Europe. Similar suggestions were floated at the Detroit Jobs Summit in 1994 and the Lille Jobs Summit in 1996, but they achieved nothing.

Mr Brown will no doubt find reason to feel cheerful about this weekend's outcome. Even if it is not a spectacular success, it is hardly likely to match up to some of the great disasters.

Churchill, for example, suffered the indignity of starting a summit and being deposed from power before it ended. The Potsdam Conference in 1945 was held during the general election. Polling day was July 5, but the count was delayed for three weeks for the votes of servicemen. Meanwhile, Churchill trooped off to have his pow-wow with Stalin and Harry Truman, taking along the leader of the opposition, Clement Attlee, for the sake of good form. Unfortunately for Churchill, Attlee unexpectedly won the election by a landslide and returned to Potsdam on his own.

THIRTY-FOUR years later, the Guadeloupe summit of 1979 was a political disaster for James Callaghan. Few can now remember who was discussed between the then Prime Minister, US President Jimmy Carter, Helmut Schmidt and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing on the Caribbean island. But it was in fact a significant meeting, including a preparation of the ground for the modernisation of Britain's nuclear deterrent and the sifting on British soil of cruise missiles.

No, all that is remembered is what Callaghan said — or rather did not say — on his return to Heathrow airport. It was the Winter of Discontent, and the papers had taken a dim view of the PM sunning himself while the rest of the country suffered. Jet-lagged and tetchy, Callaghan told reporters that he did not believe people in the rest of the world thought Britain was in a state of chaos.

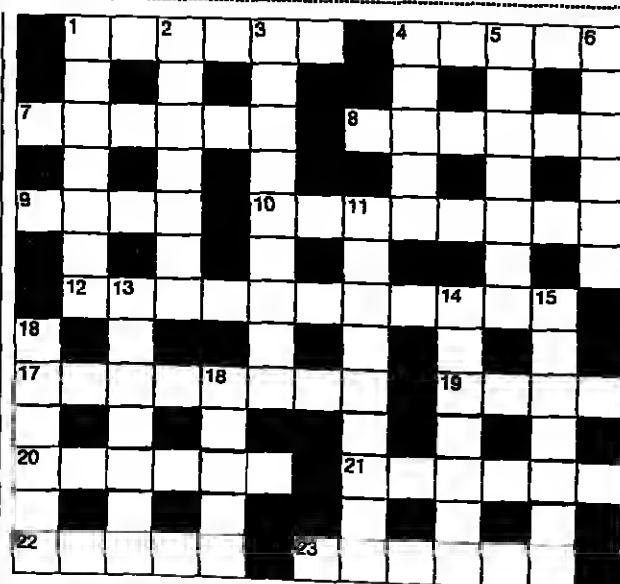
Next morning's Sun carried the immortal headline: "Crisis: What Crisis?" Callaghan's fate was sealed. His summit days were over. It was 18 years before a Labour leader attended another.



National flutter... G7 media briefings will be at the Q&E centre PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

Quick Crossword No. 8677

Across
1 "Stone" for rubbing (6)
4 Uninfluenced by liquor (5)
7 Pamper (6)
8 Pleasantly influenced by liquor (6)
9 Couch (4)
10 Passageway (6)
12 Author who died in 1966 (6,5)
17 Expert shot (8)
19 File (berry) (4)
20 Feeling of hostility (6)
21 Ethnic (6)



Down
1 Stir up or annoy (7)
2 Communication (7)
3 Terrible upheaval or flood (5)
4 Express contempt (5)
5 Tenacious animal (7)
6 Recompense (6)
11 Mountain ash (5,4)
13 Put into rhyming form (7)
14 Treaty town in the

22 Herb (5)
23 Not standing (6)
Netherlands (7)
15 Partner — save! (7)
16 Effect of blow (6)
18 Thickish flavoured liquid (5)

Stuck? Call our solutions line on 0891 338 248. Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Service supplied by ATS

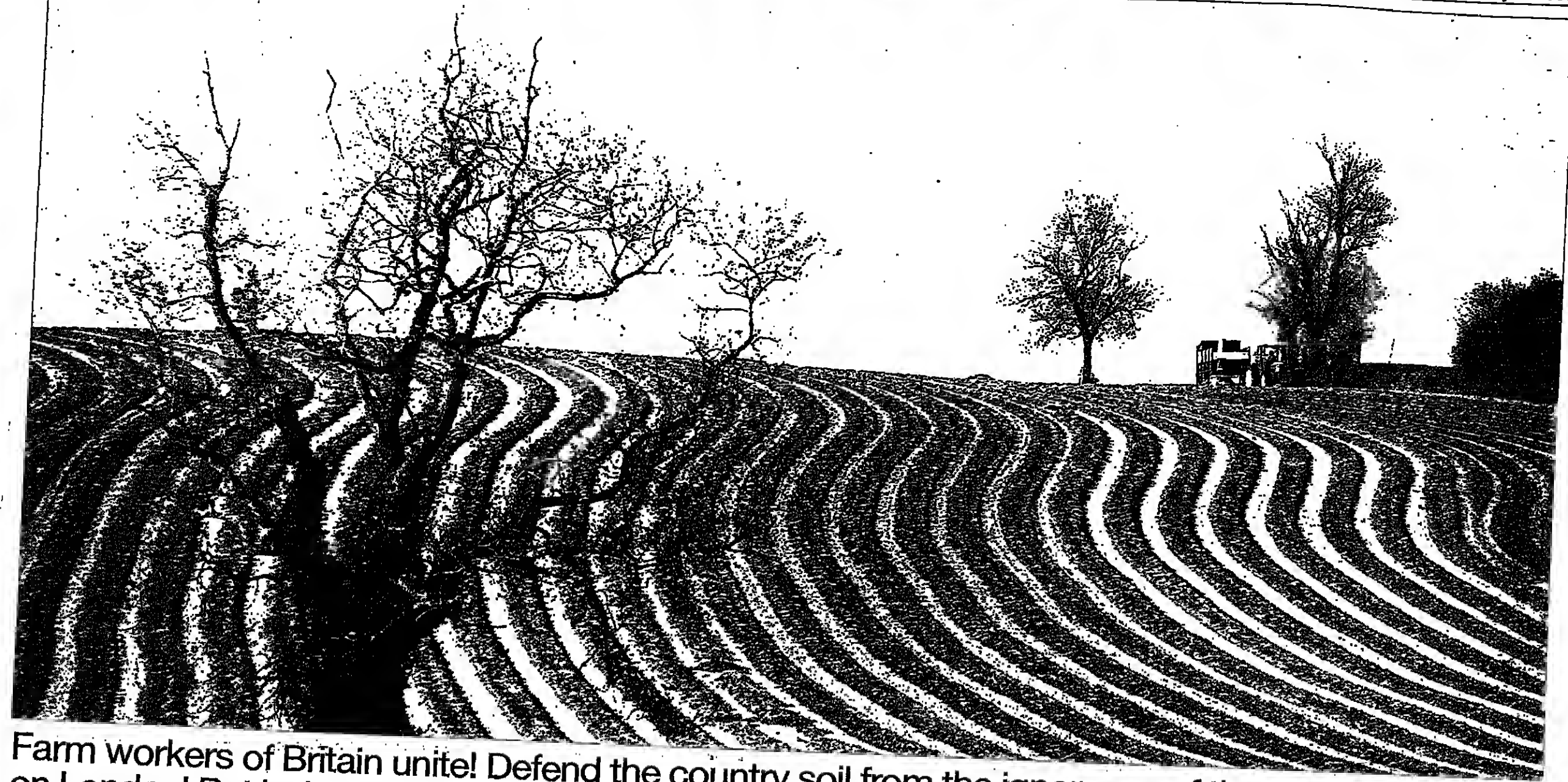
In the time it takes to read this ad, someone will be burgled.

We make no apologies for alarming you.

BARCLAYS INSURANCE SERVICES
Independent Insurance Intermediary

Barclays Insurance Services Company Limited, Registered in England, Reg. No. 973765, Registered Office: 34 Lombard Street, London EC3P 3AH.
*60 monthly payments of £3 totalling £180 APR 0%. Subject to terms. To maintain a high quality service we may monitor or record phone calls.
Written quotations from Barclays Insurance Services Company Limited, 8 Bedford Park, Croydon CR9 2XX.

Handwritten note: 1500



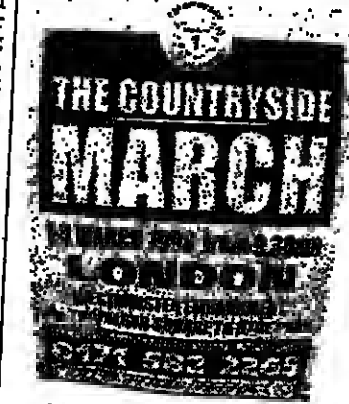
Farm workers of Britain unite! Defend the country soil from the ignorance of the city and descend on London! But is the countryside so idyllic and who, asks **Andy Beckett**, is really calling the shots

Yeomen get marching orders

TEN DAYS ago, a proud little item appeared on the Londoner's Diary page of the Evening Standard. The Duke of Northumberland, it revealed, had so many staff on his estates that, come the Countryside March in eight days' time, trains would not be sufficient to carry them to the capital. The Duke was keen for his employees to go so, after paternal deliberation, he announced a solution: "an executive coach" would be hired for the day. "The people of Northumberland," one of the Duke's men grandly declared, "are going to London."

In recent weeks, the more conservative newspapers have been busy with such stories. Britain's beef herders and huntmen, retainers and racing trainers, tenant farmers and ramblers all stand ready. It is reported, to descend on the capital and demand the Government's attention.

Last July, 100,000 people came to Hyde Park for the Countryside Rally; this time, the Countryside Alliance, organisers of both events, are expecting "a figure approaching a quarter of a million". Almost 2,000 coaches have been booked. There will be 68 spe-



cial trains, a radio station called March FM, and an amateur "air force" of 20 light aircraft. Along the ivory canyons of St James's, the gentlemen's clubs will permit a special Sunday opening. Wellington boots can be left at the door.

The day, in short, is intended as a demonstration of a certain sort of Britishness: country-based, class-harmonious, everyone mucking in together. But this picture of a willing and gentle dissent is not quite a true one. The Countryside March, like the Countryside Rally, and the rural life they both claim to be protecting, will not be an entirely voluntary affair.

Last spring, before the Countryside Rally, members of the Oakley Hunt in Buckinghamshire received a letter from their hunt committee. "You should arrange to take a day off work, or pretend to be sick or whatever," it instructed. "Keep the children back from school... and BE THERE! You have no excuse. IF YOU SIMPLY CAN NOT BE BOTHERED, THEN PLEASE DO NOT BOTHER TO COME HUNTING WITH THE OAKLEY NEXT SEASON EITHER..."

The same sentiments, more mildly put, were repeated by a columnist in Horse & Hound. It

was possible to think of them, perhaps, as a bit of arm-twisting among friends. But this time, for the Countryside March, the pressure started as a friendly thing, he says. "Jokes about a day's holiday, being taken down to London. When they said no, it got more serious. One of the men was told that if he didn't go, he wouldn't be given any more overtime on the farm."

Paul Hallsworth, a branch secretary for the TGWU in North Yorkshire, has been contacted by two unwilling marchers. "The pressure started as a friendly thing," he says. "Jokes about a day's holiday, being taken down to London. When they said no, it got more serious. One of the men was told that if he didn't go, he wouldn't be given any more overtime on the farm."

Both the labourers live in "tied accommodation" - houses provided as part of their wages. "It is very difficult," says Hallsworth, "to get them to speak out." He has been asked not to give out their phone numbers.

Yet coercion always produces the odd move open rebel. There is one of them in Dorset, working on an estate, and living in a fold in the hills. She has refused to go on the

Countryside March; she wants to talk about it.

Her house is four miles from the estate, hidden down a track. Unlike her three fellow gardeners, she does not depend on her employer for a home. She is nervous, nevertheless. "If you printed my name, or the estate's," she says, looking down at her kitchen floor, "I'd get the sack."

That first became a danger in the middle of January. One lunchtime, a year or so after she had started as "under-under-gardener", she went as usual to the shed where the estate workers ate their sandwiches. The annual pay review was due in a few days; a memo to "all staff" was waiting.

This one, however, was a little unusual. "There will be a Countryside March on 1st March 1998 in London," the estate manager began. The owners of the estate, he continued, "have indicated that they would wish all members of staff to attend... together with their wives/husbands and families." The estate would be organising a coach to leave at 7.30am; breakfast, lunch, and "liquid refreshment" would be provided. Then came the final instruction: "Please let my secretary know

if you are unable to attend, together with the reasons."

The estate's employees were given four days to declare their intentions. But this particular gardener knew hers straightaway: "I felt really threatened. I felt frightened. And then I felt outraged."

That lunchtime, and for the rest of the day, she could talk of nothing but the memo and why it should be disobeyed. The other gardeners listened. "They agreed it was an abuse of the employer's authority" - and then backed away.

The year before, only one of them had gone to the Countryside Rally. No memo had been sent out. This time, though, the head gardener agreed to go on the March, "out of respect" for the estate owner. His subordinates, without enthusiasm, said yes too: they "didn't want to scupper their pay roll". The rebel was left "fuming" on her own.

"I knew my opinions on hunting were different from everyone else's," she says, fiddling with a corner of the memo. "But I didn't want to have to stand up about [being against] it." She pauses. The fridge hums. "This kind of work really relies on references."

Quite soon after the memo had been handed out, a poster advertis-

ing the Countryside March appeared in the estate office window. Boxes of badges and larger posters followed; employees were told to wear the former and put up the latter in their cars. Everybody did, except the under-under-gardener. "I despise them for going along with it," she says.

WHEN the deadline came for agreeing to march, she walked in to see the landowner's secretary, said she wasn't going, and refused to give a reason. "I found it so outrageous that you actually had to account for yourself." Her muddy fingers tighten on the memo. "This is 1998, not 1898."

Not everyone who knows the British countryside is quite so sure about it. The Rural Development Commission, the government quango in charge of improving the country economy, sees industrial relations in some places unchanged since the Middle Ages.

"Anyone different from the norm will stick out," says Elaine Graham. "There are pressures to comply." Jobs on page 14

The London Review of Books brings you some of the most thought-provoking words in the English language...

FREE OFFER!

If you love reading, delight in literary debate and have a nose for a bargain, there's never been a better time to bury that nose in the London Review of Books. Because this month, we're offering 50% off the regular rate for a one year's subscription plus six additional issues free. Should you decide to cancel after receiving your first six free fortnightly issues, you can do so and we'll refund every penny of your subscription. So you stand to gain a total of thirty issues, with absolutely no risk.

'Virtuoso performances'

In any copy of the London Review of Books you'll find essays by leading writers on a wide range of subjects, from literature, politics and history to philosophy, science and the arts. Recent examples include: Adam Phillips on Martin Amis, Iain Sinclair on the Millennium Dome, John Lanchester on 'Fanny', Jenny Diski on the 'Titanic' and Alan Bennett's 1997 Diary. To quote the Times, 'virtuoso performances' are what our readers have come to expect.

Less than the cost of a Sunday newspaper

With discounts, the London Review of Books costs less than a Sunday newspaper but provides far more intellectual substance, lasting value and sheer enjoyment. To start receiving your six free issues, with absolutely nothing to lose, send us the coupon with your payment now.

SIX ISSUES FREE AND 50% OFF

Please send me six free issues of the London Review of Books and enter my one year subscription of 24 fortnightly issues at a saving of 50%. I enclose payment now but I understand that if, after six issues, I wish to cancel my subscription, I can do so and receive a full refund. The six issues will be mine to keep at no cost.

Mr/Ms/Ms/Miss _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

☐ Tick if you do not wish to receive information on products or services which may be of interest.

Post on London Review of Books, Freepost, WC99 199, LONDON, WC1A 3BR, ENGLAND. No stamp required if posted in the UK.

Rates: 1 year (24 + 6 issues) 50% off ☐ UK: £29.95 (save £30.00)

☐ Europe: £36.00 (save £36.00) ☐ Far East & Australasia: £42.00 (save £42.00)

☐ Middle East, Latin America, Africa, India: £39.50 (save £39.50)

☐ I enclose a cheque for £_____ made payable to 'LRB Ltd.'

☐ Please charge my MasterCard/Amex/Diners Club/Visa

No.

Card expiry date _____/_____/_____ Signature _____

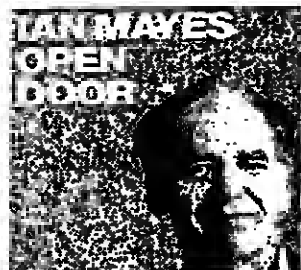
☎ Credit card hotline (0771) 209 1441 Fax: (0771) 209 1151

London Review OF BOOKS

ENGAGING THE MIND

THE ARTS COUNCIL OF ENGLAND

Where war isn't an arcade game



IAN MAYES
OPEN DOOR

SPENT four hours one evening this week reading (re-reading for the most part) our coverage of the Iraq crisis, chronologically from about last November. You may wonder why. A few days earlier I had taken a call from a reader accusing the Guardian of warmongering.

The call closely followed publication of the Guardian/ICM poll as our Page One lead on February 10. The poll showed that 56 per cent of those questioned supported British involvement in military action, including bombing raids, against — as it was phrased — Saddam Hussein's Iraq. The headline read, Majority say both Iraq, and beneath it there was a four-column picture of a British soldier in mask and suit designed to protect him against the effect of chemical weapons. He pointed a gun directly out from the page at us.

There is no doubt that a poll confined to Guardian readers would produce a markedly different result. Letters to the editor provide one indication. The Letters Editor says the vast majority of her correspondents are strongly against military action, whether Britain is involved or not — "maybe 98 per cent", was actually her estimate.

I put down the accusation of warmongering — almost the only complaint about our coverage of the crisis of which I am aware — as the red mist effect. I say this with no intention of disrespect. From time to time we all feel so passionately about an issue that we mis-sear, mishear, misread anything to do with it. Newspapers, chasing the fleeting moment, are prone to this: so that even when a paper seems to have done everything it can in its presentation of an emotive subject to encourage a calm encounter with the reader, the result is still a collision.

In looking over our coverage — the news reports, columns, leaders, cartoons, and several Analysis pages — I found hardly a note that could be called bellicose. The nearest was the view, put forward by one of our senior commentators, that in the absence of a climb-down by Saddam, military action might be the best option. This is broadly still his view, conflicting somewhat with the Guardian's line as expressed in the Leader columns.

The paper's view is that a diplomatic solution should be pursued for as long as possible, but that if it fails, the use of force would be more vigorous; the leaders appear to be short of ideas about what happens if it

finally has to be accepted that this course has failed. On military action, our chief foreign leader writer told me, "The Guardian has always been a strong supporter of the UN. At the very least we believe that any military action should be properly authorised by the Security Council."

Let us return to the news pages. The Foreign Editor of the Guardian, who has had primary responsibility for organising our coverage, has very deliberately tried to keep any gungho tendency out of it. In order to avoid hyping an already tense situation, he has even been reluctant to include a tag saying The Iraq Crisis in the folio line of his pages.

At no stage during the crisis has there been a special meeting of senior Guardian editorial staff to discuss it or to plan our coverage. This has been done through the normal operation of the various sections of the paper: the foreign pages, and from time to time the front page, and through the routine mechanism of Guardian editorial meetings.

Earlier this week the Guardian became the first British newspaper to get a correspondent into Baghdad. Maggie O'Kane was one of several Guardian reporters who had put in visa applications. Other Guardian journalists may still go if visas are granted. O'Kane flew from Belfast (where she lives), to Heathrow where she picked up some money, a satellite phone and a gas mask. She then flew on to Amman, to complete the journey to Baghdad overland. A chemical warfare protection suit being taken to Baghdad for her by a crew from CBC.

Her front page reports on Tuesday and Thursday were valuable reminders of the plight of ordinary Iraqis. In the first, O'Kane renewed her acquaintance with a man who had lost his wife and four of their five children in the bombing of the Amiriyah bomb shelter. In the second, she described the conditions under which doctors were attempting to treat children, malnourished as a result of sanctions. This prompted a response from the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, which appeared on the Comment page yesterday.

These pieces by Maggie O'Kane, by introducing into the sequence of events material which the authorities find uncomfortable, or inconveniently timed, fulfil one of the basic functions of journalism. They describe it as it actually is. Without taking this reality into account the debate loses meaning. I think the range and calm tone of our coverage so far have provided excellent access to a complex and often rapidly-changing story.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Ian Mayes, by phoning 0171 233 9898 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Fax: 0171 233 9897. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk



THEME OF THE WEEK
STATUES

No great thought about it: the statue of the Virgin Mary in the street of the town of St. Paul's, London, was the subject of a recent article in the Guardian. The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

The statue, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake. The original, which is a copy of the original, was found to be a fake.

HAVE YOU BEEN PAYING ATTENTION?

1 If you called M&L Cars in Hackney, north London, what would you want?
a) a taxi
b) a time
c) an ambulance
d) car rental

2 Who planted a ticking timebomb under the Great British Indian curry?
a) the baboon
b) the blimp
c) the blubber
d) the habba

3 What was Monica Lewinsky's nickname for Hillary Clinton?
a) the baboon
b) the blimp
c) the blubber
d) the habba

4 Which Elgar variation won a standing ovation?
a) "A great British export."
b) "Which politician about which pop group?"
c) John Prescott on Chumbawamba
d) Tony Blair on Blur

5 "A great British export." Which politician about which pop group?
a) John Prescott on Chumbawamba
b) Tony Blair on Blur
c) Lady Thatcher on the Rolling Stones
d) John Major on the Prodigy

6 Who or what is the "Gateshead Flasher"?
a) the baboon
b) the blimp
c) the blubber
d) the habba

7 Which ads had to be dropped because they got up people's noses?
a) What did the columnist, Nigel Dempster, say he was scared of?
b) a taxi
c) common people
d) police

8 What did the columnist, Nigel Dempster, say he was scared of?
a) a taxi
b) a time
c) an ambulance
d) car rental

9 What smart vehicle was Nigel Dempster driving when he was stopped?
a) Bentley Azure
b) Mercedes
c) Council dumpster
d) Honda Accord

10 Some Body has a mother. Who?
a) the baboon
b) the blimp
c) the blubber
d) the habba

11 Who suppressed the dope on this?
a) the baboon
b) the blimp
c) the blubber
d) the habba

12 Who said: "Now I speak the truth in Cabinet and in return I can't speak my truth in public."
a) the baboon
b) the blimp
c) the blubber
d) the habba

13 What was the name of the impostor who infiltrated an RAF base and posed as an American naval lieutenant?
a) Lt Cracker
b) Lt Barry
c) Lt Looney
d) Lt Dart

14 Rued has gone, but how has Dutch courage remained at Chelsea?
a) the baboon
b) the blimp
c) the blubber
d) the habba

15 Who is showing their CV on TV in the hope of getting a new job?
a) the baboon
b) the blimp
c) the blubber
d) the habba

Gabriella Morris

Awards of The Week

Great Railway Journey of The Week: John Prescott made an epic trek across Yorkshire. After a visit to Scarborough, he allegedly told Labour Party officials he was taking the train home to Hull. However, he got off after three miles to pick up his Jaguar, which was handily parked there.

Straight Talker of The Week: Actress Jane Lapotina, who, asked by a doctor if she was under stress, replied: "No more than a menopausal woman of 53 who lives alone and whose contract with the Royal Shakespeare Company is going to end in July."

Insouciance of The Week: Awarded to Trevor Quint, the Tasmanian lighthouse keeper who spotted a shipwrecked couple, Doreen and Peter Cheek, who had been clinging to rocks for seven hours. Quint recalled: "I think they were pleased to see me."

Feud of The Week: Name: Michel Roux. Occupation: Son of Albert Roux and chef at Le Gavroche. Feud: He has barred Michael Winner from his restaurant on the grounds that Winner lambasted a receptionist, reducing her to tears when she told him there was no table for him.

How You Rate? 0-4 Corner 5-9 Free Kick 9-14 Penalty 15 Goal

NoBlesse Oblige of The Week: Michael Winner, who told the Radio Times: "Having a double-barrelled name merely makes it hell signing autographs."

Feud of The Week: Name: Michael Winner. Occupation: Film director and restaurant critic. Feud: Denies being rude to the receptionist and claims his ban is simply retaliation for a bad review he wrote about the Waterside Inn in Bray. Denies another Roux edict, claiming: "Winner sent a solicitor's letter to the newspaper saying the exchange with the receptionist never took place."

How You Rate? 0-4 Corner 5-9 Free Kick 9-14 Penalty 15 Goal

Yeoman get marching orders

page 13 estates and in agriculture are rarely unionised, often seasonal and many miles apart: "You don't have the choice to say 'I quit'."

According to the TGWU, one agricultural worker in three lives in a tied house. Those employed by estates are particularly vulnerable. Unless they can show they are doing actual farm work, they can be evicted with no more than a court order. And that vulnerability is an everyday fact: between 1980 and 1994, the number of rural labourers fell overall by more than a third.

THOSE that remain are not notably well paid. Thirty-five per cent of country employees earn less than £5 an hour, in towns and cities, less than a quarter do. Down in Dorset, the rebellious gardener, who is nearly 40, gets £4 an hour. She laughs out loud at the notion of a pension. And at weekends Countryside March or not, she still has her estate "duties".

"We have to turn up and do whatever's required: water the greenhouses, make sure there are flowers in the house, run in with a load of logs while they stand there in their silk pyjamas. We're not paid for it, and it's not laid down how long it should take. In theory it could mean mowing all the lawns." Doesn't she have a contract? "Sort of," she mutters.

Last Christmas, for the estate's staff party, employees were asked to pay £14.50 each. Drinks, served in the big house, were extra. In fact, the free refreshments for the Countryside March are the first such gifts that staff can remember. And what, exactly, are they being induced to support? When the workers got their memo, a leaflet from the Countryside Alliance came stapled on the back. Many thousands have been distributed, but among its dozen paragraphs about starting points and stewards and catering facilities, there are only a few lines about the March's purpose. This is to "put the countryside on the political map", specifically about "the hunt-



Listen to us... spontaneous protest at last year's march. This year many protesters will be there because their masters ordered them to march

ing issue... a test-case for the future of the countryside, and other issues... such as building over the greenbelt and a fair deal for farmers."

So far, this reticence and vagueness has served the Countryside Alliance very well. Around, as they put it, "the core of country people" who oppose a ban on hunting, the Alliance has wrapped a layer upon layer of additional claimants: struggling hill farmers, mourners for lost post offices, supplicants for rural buses, even a chap from Wales marching for an ambulance. Many of these grievances may be justified; some may be held by people who ride to hounds, but only a few have any-

thing to do with the minority sport of hunting. At the Alliance's most optimistic estimate, 200,000 people oppose the ban. In fact, a clear majority of people in the countryside oppose the practice. Last October, an opinion poll by MORI found 57 per cent of country people against foxhunting, and only 32 per cent for. Yet despite this, when Hyde Park fills on March 1, it is likely that commentators, like last time, will see the whole crowd as pro-hunting. Without any speeches scheduled, or any plans for a rally or stalls, other points of view will be difficult to track down.

A few country organisations have spotted the sleight of hand. The Council for the Protection of Rural England has decided not to back the March. "There are issues it is raising with which we have a great deal of sympathy," says Tony Burton, assistant director of policy. "But we have no view on hunting, and the roots of this march lie very much in the hunting issue."

The National Trust wants "no involvement" either. "We were asked if we would participate in lighting beacons," says Caroline Andemary, its chief press officer. "As a charity, we cannot allow political activity on our property. Their own publicity points to the March being 'political'. They are bringing on board a lot of issues, some of which are conflicting."

The Ramblers' Association is wary too ("not on the same wave-length"). And Barry Leathwood's rural workers union, as part of the TGWU, has voted to ban foxhunting for its last eight annual conferences in a row. Meanwhile, the groups being marshalled for the March by the pro-hunting press have a distinctly manor-house feel: the Country Landowners Association, the Salmon & Trout Association, the Scottish Landowners Federation.

The Countryside Alliance maintains that no pressure is being exerted by employers or landlords. "In fact, it's quite the opposite," says Pamela Morton, a press officer. "People aren't asking their bosses' permission to go."

In her dark cottage, the dissenting gardener begs to differ. She is waiting for the estate's reaction. "Some of my colleagues think I'm being unwise," she says. This is her first gardening job. Yet she doesn't seem as scared as she might be. On the way back to the station, through the cold and empty lanes, she explains why. When she moved to the village 10 years ago, lots of people would go and watch the hunt. "No one talks about it now." "It's as if they're ashamed," she says. "It's as if they're ashamed." The dry cleaners is turning away riding jackets.

A hard life down on the farm

●Ten million people, a fifth of the population, live in rural England.

●A report in 1994 from the Rural Development Commission found that in nine out of 12 areas studied, at least a fifth of households were living in or on the margins of poverty.

●Half the people in three of those areas had salaries of less than £8,000 a year.

●Jobs in agriculture, forestry and fishing fell by a third between 1971 and 1995.

●A third of full-time agricultural workers live in tied cottages. If they lose jobs, they lose their homes.

●Dairy cowmen work an average of 53 hours a week, tractor drivers 50.

●A spokesperson from the Transport and General Workers Union said that agriculture is the most dangerous industry in Britain. In the year up to April 1997, 63 people died in accidents on farms including eight children.

●Many villages have no rail service (93 per cent), no GP (80), no daily bus service (71) and no school (49).

●Housing prices have escalated. In most districts house prices are between 10 and 50 per cent above the national average.

●The number of young people homeless in the countryside is increasing faster than in London and the inner cities.

Lucy Maggs

What the peace talks need is a higher body count

Here's a tricky one: an interview with David Lodge, the writer, whose new play is an attack on the concept of the newspaper interview

An oral exam with the Prof

INTERVIEW BY SABINE DURANT



"When you've written one of your really nasty pieces... do you imagine the victim reading it?... the sudden fading of his smile as he comes to the first sneer, and then the thumping of his heart, the spasm in the gut, the rush of adrenalin in the bloodstream, as it dawns on him... that he has been well and truly stitched up? I mean, do you imagine it? Does it give you a kick? Is that why you do this job?" — Home Truths, 1998

This week David Lodge, the 63-year-old British novelist, launched an attack on the newspaper interviewer. The big guns went off in Home Truths, his new play at the Birmingham Rep, in which Fanny Tarrant, a hard-boiled young woman journalist with an "edit-into" accent and a tattoo on her shoulder, comes to "do" a has-been British novelist and comes undone herself.

But there was light artillery, too, in a newspaper article last week-end, and in an item on BBC Newsnight, in which Lodge discussed night, in which Lodge discussed the rise of the interview — "a transaction, a seduction, a game, a struggle, a collusion, a confession" — finding in it a new habit of gossip, spittlefulness or "jugal journalism", what Salman Rushdie called "the culture of denigration". Lodge is a famously dour man.

with a narrow mouth that turns down at the corners, bristling brows above hooded eyes. He is not, as anyone who has ever knocked up against him at a literary party can tell you, one for small talk. Students arriving at Birmingham University where he has taught for many years (currently holding the title of Hon Prof) are said to be alarmed by the discrepancy between the comic rumbustiousness of his novels (most notably the chirpy campus romps *Nice Work* and *Changing Places*) and the beetly solemn lecturer standing before them.

So if he has agreed to talk to you in his home this week of all weeks you might expect a rather chilly reception: to meet a man armed with his own agenda and the chilly self-reliance of the recently CBSEd, defences up, approaching questions with the teeth-bared caution an unmuzzled pit-bull terrier gives a policeman. What you don't expect is fresh coffee in Fort-melior mugs, a rueful smile at what his play has unleashed, and an odd kind of openness.

The play, he insists, is not motivated by revenge, and the female interviewer (interviewers are usually women, he notes) is a "synthesis" of various people. Including Zoe Heller, the writer and one-time interviewer who in the Independent memorably slaughtered *Paradise News*, Lodge's novel before last ("to blush or gag?" she asked), and who has a tattoo on her shoulder. "Does she?" he says astounded. Oh, really, that's funny. It is funny. She did write such a very nasty review. "I completely made that up. Absolutely. Oh, that's very amusing."

He is sitting in an armchair in his sitting room in Edgheaston, the nice bit of Birmingham. It is a bare room, beige sofa, chairs, fitted carpet, single beanbag, no clutter. The house was built on the foundations of a chapel of rest and there is something monk-like about its quiet and decorative reticence: "double glazing", Lodge points out with a nod to the large modern windows. The kitchen is clean and spare too (condiments in the practical steel containers you find in rented holiday homes). But perhaps he cleared all personal details away before I came. His wife, like the wife in *Home Truths*, has gone out.

This is all the sort of stuff that unsettles him. "It is the ambiguous nature of the interview form that intrigues me," he says. "It's a professional business, but it's almost like ordinary social life. You invite somebody into your house and have a conversation with them and however brief the interview you are making a personal relationship so there is this conflict, mismatch, a tension between the professional and the private."

So has he been stung by things that have been said about him in the past? "I can't say I have suffered as I imagine some people have suffered," he says airily. "Though there have been one of two occasions when I've felt there was an element of treachery about it, when the interviewer seems extremely friendly and sympathetic and then wrote a rather unsympathetic portrayal."

He was shocked, he says, by the type of questions posed when *Therapy*, his most recent novel, came out (one interviewer following up the plot of the book asked him if he had ever been unfaithful to Mary, to whom he has been married for 39 years). "Very personal questions," he says, "which 10 to 15 years ago would have been regarded as impertinent and when you're asked a personal question it's difficult to handle. If you refuse to answer it it looks as though you're being defensive but if you

do answer it honestly you may later regret it, and think what right does the general public have to know the answer to this question?" The protocol of what is appropriate to ask has shifted.

He believes this might be related to the "therapy culture" — interviewers want to find out what their subject is repressing, interviewees feel the need to confess. He shudders. "There is this phenomenon of quite voluntary confessional writing, books, TV programmes, in which people expose their private lives in the most astonishing way."

At one point, Lodge says that, as writing is such a "lonely solitary business", it's "nice having people take an interest in you". He also says that "most men enjoy talking to younger women". It isn't long then before he acts out his own notion of the interview as confession and enters into discussion of his own weaknesses.

There is his over-sensitivity ("to these little nuances, the minutiae of human reaction and motivation"). There is his constant sense of anxiety. Little things as well as big? "Oh yes." And then there is his increasing deafness which he hates: "It's a comic infirmity as opposed to blindness which is a tragic infirmity." He wears a hearing aid in his left ear — adjusting it from time to time from a credit-card sized remote control in his pocket. Sometimes, he really should wear one in the right ear too. "But the next stage is the grave really," he says with fantastic gloominess.

He was an only child (he grew up in a thrifty household in Blackheath) and his father, who is now 91, has become his responsibility. It reminds him that he would like to have had siblings. He suffers, he says, from only-child self-obsession — "probably a bad thing" — and its

cell-mate low self-esteem. "I've got more precarious in that way, more vulnerable as I've got older," he says. "Why? I don't know. Maybe it's something to do with fear of death at some fundamental level. I don't know."

He looks away out of the window at the tall hedge they've grown to block out the neighbour's house. "I used to think of myself as underestimated and I always had quiet pleasure when I had some success, but I had a run of quite successful novels and then I had a level to maintain which was probably impossible to do, and then I got some extremely unpleasant reviews among the *Zen* reviewers so maybe that contributed to it."

His religion — he has been "weaned" he says from the literal doctrine of Catholicism and now believes in the spirit if not the superstition, calling himself "an Agnostic Catholic" — does not appear to have been a great support to him in his personal crises. "I negotiate my own path through these things," he says. His hands tend to move about a lot, he tugs at the knuckles sometimes or smooths the ends of his fingers. But as he says this, he brings the two hands together as if in prayer.

Lodge has always had an ambivalent relationship to religion. In most of his novels, there are characters who are controlled or repressed — usually sexually — by some guiding principle, be it a belief in God or fear of life. Through the freedoms allowed to them by Lodge's pen, they get to throw off the petty privations of

'I've got more precarious, more vulnerable as I've got older. Maybe it's to do with the fear of death'

their daily existence (broken washing machines, difficult children, nagging partners) and try out other lives — wife-swapping, culture-swapping — to quench different thirsts. Lodge, of course, doesn't. Could that be an underlying source of his depression? (If he can confess, I can analyse.) Is that something he regrets?

"Oh, of course, yes. I mean if you live according to some kind of code which involves the repression of desire of some kind and all civilisation, as Freud pointed out, does depend on the repression of desire. But I mean if you, as I did, grew up in a Christian context with conventional morality you would be less than human if you didn't occasionally long for liberation from these constraints. But you make a choice really and that was conditioned by all sorts of different factors."

"I've had a very long and happy marriage and that's been a great blessing. I take the view that the nuclear family and a long stable marriage is more likely to be a happiness than a lot of temporary relationships."

And it's when talking about family that Lodge lightens. He has three children. The eldest, a daughter of 40, has just produced a grandchild, a four-month-old girl, something he and Mary haven't "banked" on but which is a "great event in our lives". His youngest, Christopher, 31, has Down's Syndrome and lives an hour away in a sheltered community.

He was born at the time of Abernethy, "it seemed extraordinary that we had this what seemed at the time personal tragedy — though it hasn't proved to be one but we were completely unprepared for it — at the same time as this absolutely catastrophic public tragedy."

Christopher does carpentry during the day. Lodge jumps and leaps helterskelter across the room, returning with a beautiful wooden bowl. "This is one of the things he made. He turns things on a lathe and does it on his own," he says and there is pride in his voice.

Shortly after this, Lodge's hearing aid packs up. Which is convenient as he has a lunch to go to and he feels that he has been talking enough. So there you have it. A transaction, a seduction, a game, a struggle, a collusion, a confession? But not a stitch-up, surely. And do I imagine him reading this? Well, to quote him: "You must know that when you close the door and have gone away that your subject is going to be talking about you. I mean it's an appalling thought to think of all the things that people are saying to us which we don't overhear and we don't know. But since we do it about everybody else, they must be doing it about us."

Home Truths is at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre until March 7. Tickets can be booked on 0121-236 4455.

David Lodge: 'The protocol of what is appropriate to ask has shifted'

PHOTOGRAPH DON McPHEE

SIMON HOGGART'S WEEK



What the peace talks need is a higher body count

NORTHERN IRELAND peace talks without the IRA or their surrogates are not worth, in Lyndon Johnson's words, a bucket of warm spit. There isn't any point. If it were up to the mainstream politicians, they could have made a deal 28 years ago. That's what politicians are good at: finding systems which give them power and prestige and something to occupy their time.

But the Northern Ireland stalemate was born in violence ("Ulster" will be right, and Ulster will be right), maintained through the threat of violence for 30 years through more violence. In 1970, Reggie Maudling, then home secretary, talked about "an acceptable level of violence" and was derided for his cynical pessimism. But that's all a British government can realistically achieve. Three hundred deaths a year: unacceptable. A couple of dozen: fine. Right now it's as good as it's likely to get.

So my suggestion is this: Announce that only organisations with a proven track record of violence are admitted to the talks. Any group which cannot show that it has murdered at least half a dozen people in the previous two months to be thrown out. Reverse the Mitchell principles. The resulting talks would be difficult and distasteful. But any agreement they produced would be an agreement worth having.

AMI missing something in the obsessional coverage of Rudolph Giuliani's sackings? A Dutchman who manages a team largely composed of foreigners is dismissed and replaced by an Italian. Who cares? It doesn't seem to have much to do with English football. Why should we get any more excited than if a Japanese merchant bank replaced a German with an American as the head of its London office?

It turns out that Lord Irvine has commandeered 87 works of art from English and Scottish galleries to decorate his official residence. This is, apparently, normal practice, though rarely on such a grand scale. Chatting with friends this week, I wondered whether any other Lord Chancellor in living memory had become a national joke. Someone mentioned Lord Hailsham, whose blend of the weird and the arrogant was similar to Irvine's. But Hailsham was fortunate to live in more reverential times, when papers were loth to point out when politicians were bonkers. Either way, it is extraordinary to reflect that both have held the office once occupied by Saint Thomas More.

THE Americans have bought the original scripts of *Fawty Towers* and plan another stab at making an American version of the show. It might work (Stephoe and Son became the highly successful *Sandford and Son*, and *Till Death Do Us Part* was a huge hit as *All in the Family*). But the odds are against it, mainly because sitcoms are quite different on both sides of the Atlantic. British sitcoms are about coping with despair. The point about *Hancock*, Harold Steptoe, Basil Fawty and Dorothy in *Men Behaving Badly* is that, next morning, they are still in the same desperate state as they always were. Dorothy will never find a reasonable bloke, Harold will never date a sophisticated and beautiful woman, *Hancock* was stuck forever in Railway Cuttings with Sid James. (When he left, his career began to collapse.) American sitcoms are about self-improvement and advancement. Characters learn from their failures; in Britain they are defeated by them. Even in *Roseanne*, praised as the great working-class sitcom, the last scene always smoothed away the rows and disagreements, ending with hugs all round. In the

American *Fawty Towers*, Mannel will earn enough to go to wallers' training school, and the visiting Germans will tell Basil how their joyous visit has cemented international relations.

I WAS sitting in a country pub the other day. At the next table were a middle-class family who were entertaining a German chap, a business colleague of the husband. He had that annoyingly perfect English which so many of his countrymen possess. At one point the wife said of someone, "She's a Guardian-reader type, really," and the German seemed unimpressed. "Excuse me, this Guardian reader, what is that?"

"Oh, you know," said the woman vaguely. "She believes in international peace and understanding, and putting the world to rights, and, you know, equality for everyone and all that kind of thing."

As any Guardian writer will tell you, Guardian readers are quite capable of driving it up the wall. But I was delighted to see that, after hearing this definition, the

German looked rather puzzled that the term should be in any way pejorative.

DURING the brief select committee meeting on the Freemasons this week I was struck again by how the Labour MPs in particular tend to see them as a sinister, hidden conspiracy, while the Masons regard themselves as the persecuted, innocent victims of a witchhunt. In fact, there is no great web of Freemasonry stretching out around the world, no central point from which all operations are directed. Instead it's highly localised. My belief is that some Lodges are indeed full of crooked coppers, or bent councillors and contractors doing each other favours. Others are as blameless as any Rotarian Club. But they are very different.

You can get a sense of this at their fascinating museum, in Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London. Anyone can visit; you just phone ahead and arrange to meet a guide — 0171 395 9258. Well worth it.

The Powell point

HEAD TO HEAD: SHOULD WE TOAST OR LAMENT THE LIFE OF ENOCH POWELL?



Yasmin Alibhai-Brown
Writer on race relations



Nicholas Budgen
Former Tory MP

Lament Toast

Dear Nicholas,

Let me tell you something that will make you blanch. I drank a glass of expensive wine to mark the day that Enoch Powell died.

Not very Christian I admit but emotion overwhelmed decency. I was ecstatic that his brooding presence (there even when he was silent and out of public life) would no more poison the possibilities of this country now offers all of us, black and white. You and me.

Not many would grieve, I thought, except for redemptive things — or irrelevant national chauvinists like Thatcher and Tebbit.

The wine soon turned sour though as the eulogies piled up, even from the most unusual quarters. He was great... a genius who made one tiny slip up that day in Birmingham in 1968.

What made him great? What did he achieve except for a legendary reputation that he could have done much? And what if Heath had lacked integrity and Powell had continued in power? Would he have put us on boats to nowhere and created his whitehead, true to his racist ideals?

He was not a racist. I am sure you will rush to say. He was a racist believes in racial gradations and uses his power to promote his ideas. This is what Powell did, with cruel precision. I once argued with him about his views on a television programme. He was utterly unrepentant about the violence his words unleashed towards my people. The hatred and paranoia in his flaming eyes were unforgettable.

Yours sincerely,
Yasmin Alibhai-Brown

Dear Yasmin,

Thank you for your honesty in admitting your hatred for Enoch Powell. He would not have felt the same hatred towards you. If he had a fault, it was a tendency to exaggerate. I see that you at least share that with him.

I will try to answer your specific questions. Powell was great because he was the most compelling post-war supporter of the nation state, the unity of the United Kingdom and free markets. He laid the intellectual foundations for much that Mrs Thatcher did in freeing up markets and in starting to tackle some of the problems of our membership of the EU.

When you talk about Powell continuing in power, you reveal your ignorance of both our political system and of Powell's role within it. In 1968, Powell was not in power. He was the Conservative spokesman on defence when Heath sacked him from the opposition front bench.

Powell is remembered as the most persuasive voice against the mistakes of the Heath government. He was a man of immense influence but almost no power. He never had the power to put you or anybody else on the boats. I agree however that his idea of "massive, albeit voluntary, repatriation" was difficult to understand. If it were massive, it would have been unlikely to be voluntary.

You feared Enoch because he expressed views which were widely held if rarely publicly expressed. He performed an important role in expressing views in a way and in circumstances in which they could be debated and even defeated. He was a democrat, not a thug.

Yours sincerely,
Nicholas Budgen,
Former Conservative MP for
Wolverhampton SW,
once Powell's constituency

Dear Nick,

Thank you for your honesty. I have often wondered, as we glowered at one another across many tables over the years, what you actually thought of someone like me. Now I think I know. You obviously perceive me as an ignorant native — the sort Powell himself was so eager to control as viceroy of India.

But I do know my history. Yes, the Tories were in opposition when Powell made his most devastating interventions. Opinion polls showed how popular he had become. What if he had challenged Heath for the leadership? What if he had won?

Powell was the advocate of a certain form of nationhood which was compelling to the new right, people who shared his xenophobic fantasies about "little black pincushions", untrustworthy Europeans and Irish and Scottish upstarts. I agree that on economic issues he was at his most persuasive, but this is hardly what ignited enthusiasm from his supporters.

Finally I did not hate Powell the man. I despised his politics. And since you have not answered my point on the violence he incited, please tell me if you think that was



right? There is nothing noble or democratic about inciting the majority to hate and fear minorities living in their midst. However fine the rhetoric.

Yours,
Yasmin

Dear Yasmin,

Your jibe about me regarding you as an ignorant native is just silly. As for your remark about Enoch's wish to be viceroy of India, that demands some reply. Curzon and Powell were fascinated by the beauty and mystery of Indian culture and religion. Both were deeply

respectful of Indian traditions. Powell was xenophobic, you say. I cannot remember off the top of my head how many languages Powell knew but he certainly knew two Indian languages, Latin and Greek.

French, German and Welsh. There may well have been more. Before the war he was profoundly affected by German philosophy. After the war he holidayed in France and had a great knowledge of French history. His love and knowledge of other countries constantly reminded him of the differences between the European nations and the impossibility of putting them into a single Union. To notice differences is not to hate.

Finally I did not hate Powell the man. I despised his politics. And since you have not answered my point on the violence he incited, please tell me if you think that was

Finally the old canard. Enoch incited violence. Enoch predicted violence. I write this in a motorway service café. I predict that if fog falls, people will continue to drive fast and accidents will happen. In this prediction I am offering no encouragement to drive too fast.

Towards Enoch, the English establishment reacted with traditional hypocrisy. He was abused for his warnings. But strict control of immigration became the policy of all parties. It was and is this strict control which reduced the rivers of blood to a trickle.

Yours,
Nicholas

Dear oh dear Nick,

What a robust defence of the indefensible. I do understand how ideologues need to cling to their own myths. If Powell was only prophesying and not advocating discord, why didn't he denounce the policy of abuse and violence that erupted in response to his words?

I know that imperialists adored the Indian culture and treasures. They helped themselves to enough of them. They just didn't like Indians, especially as Powell said when they showed up here. He did not simply know difference; he wanted to ethically cleanse Britain of those who were "different". And he did succeed in triggering our most pernicious immigration laws.

There is no research evidence to show that these stopped the rivers of blood. What is clear is that many white Britons have embraced multi-culturalism. Peregine Worsthorne has abandoned his dark thoughts. The Queen, Prince Charles and, these days, even John Major proclaim this multiculturalism. You too could be among them. Take courage and change. Or if you can't stomach that, at least accept that our destinies are now linked. We are both of this nation. I don't mind that you live in my country. Could you extend the same generosity to me?

Yours,
Yasmin

Dear Yasmin,

You suggest that Enoch Powell created racial abuse and violence and did not respond to it. There is no evidence that Enoch created violence; I have dealt with that before. There was a march of the London Dockers, after the rivers of blood speech. Their language was offensive and abusive and as self-defeating as the offensive and abusive language of politically correct liberals in abusing people whom they smear as racist.

You attack "pernicious immigration laws". Although recently there has been a major relaxation of the laws, both the great political parties have supported strict control of immigration and this has been in the interest of all sections of the community.

On the advantages of multi-culturalism, we have always had that in this country. We have derived great benefits from the arrival of the Huguenots, the Jews and, more recently, the Asians to mention but a few immigrants from other cultures. In each instance the numbers involved were crucial. Call it what you like — absorption, integration or multiculturalism — the process can only be achieved within a tolerable level of tension when the host community does not feel "swamped".

Yours,
Nicholas

spread my favours about. You were due in last week, but got squeezed out by Mrs Gamp. The Marquis responds: "I'm obliged. But remember: my lawyers are watching."

AS I WAS SAYING: I noticed the other day a reference to "the distinguished Tory MP Sir Hugh Lucas-Tooth". The word "distinguished" much like the word "banned" is cast around too lightly nowadays, especially when it's applied to the dead. The distinguishing thing about Tooth was the way his name kept appearing. He was born plain Hugh Vere Huntly Duff Warrand.

Subsequently his grandfather, Sir Robert Lucas-Tooth, whose three sons had been killed in the war, died himself, whereupon the King was pleased to revive the baronetcy to Hugh's favour, making this one-time Warrand Sir Hugh Lucas-Tooth, Bart — in which guise he arrived at the Commons in 1924 as member for Ely. Then in 1965, for reasons which elude me, he changed his name to dead poet, becoming Sir Hugh Vere Huntly Duff Munro-Lucas-Tooth of Teanachich, which is what he was when he gave up the representation of Hendon South in 1970. All of which, I submit, was rather more interesting, and probably more distin-

guished, than his ministerial career, which consisted of holding office as parliamentary under-secretary at the Home Office, 1962-65.

A poetaster: You have failed to point out that Sir Hugh was for several years a member of the National Water Council. Smallweed objects: concede: Have I? I'm frightfully sorry.

AM MUCH enjoying the new advertising campaign for Virgin Pensions, in which a man who suffered a heart attack at 31 reflects on how much better off he'd have been had he had a Virgin pension then. "At Virgin Direct" says a caption which means telling it like it is — a much better mode of procedure, Smallweed feels bound to agree, than the sort of straight talking which tells it like it isn't. I look forward to further such sites of straight-talking customer-testimony, especially those penned from a cutting just south of Nuneaton where a train running two hours late on the way to Glasgow has just stalled yet again.

THOUGH IT hasn't yet been submitted, Smallweed's application to become the poet laureate of resurgent Cowdrecht PC (another away win last Saturday) is certain to fail, according to correspon-



The Brothers are sewing it up for themselves

The concern about Freemasons employed by the criminal justice system tells us less about the shenanigans of the Brotherhood than it does about the mentalities of policemen and judges. It would be nice if we could solve the problems in the system by simply exposing those who belong to weird things.

Chris Mullin, who tirelessly supported the Birmingham Six, is right to be concerned that policemen involved in the fit-up and journalists who covered the case may have been united by their Lodge membership. But only if we were to discover that Lords Denning and Lane, the Crown Prosecution Service, all tabloid editors and various former Home Secretaries were also Masons, would it start to look as though this was the root of the problem.

Not even a shared social background can explain away the injustices inflicted by those who purport to uphold justice. The vast majority of senior judges are drawn from a tiny social and educational elite, which is partly why they relate so well to each other. But it doesn't explain why judges are so often minded to accept the word of policemen, who tend not to have been to Oxford or one of those residential schools favoured by wealthy parents who don't like their children.

It would be a neat answer to the conundrum to be able to say that Freemasonry provides the social link between a policeman who reads unconvincingly and clumsily in a residential address from a notebook that looks as though he's just bought it, and an enormously paid and be-gowned arbiter who, like Enoch Powell, combines beautiful speech and classical education with drooling lunacy.

If it transpired that PC Fitput and Mr Justice Bonkers were both members of some club for the dysfunctional, which unites professional men hung up on initiation, or enables Red Dwarf fans to meet their idols, it would all make sense very quickly. But membership of such societies is not extensive enough to be blamed for everything. Judges believe the police because they want to. The same is true of prosecutors (from whose ranks judges are often drawn) and a disgraceful number of journalists. To be successful working within the establishment, one must believe that people who hold and exercise power only do bad things for good reasons.

Lord Lane, in dismissing the 1987 appeal of the Birmingham Six, appeared not to be able to understand that Paddy Joe Hill had bought a single ticket to Belfast on the night of the bombings, even though he intended to come back. Surely, Lane argued, a single ticket indicated that he was running

away. Lane didn't seem able to relate at all to the explanation that Paddy only had enough cash for a single ticket and a couple of pints and would scrounge the price of his return fare once in Belfast. One might attribute this apparent cluelessness on Lane's part solely to his being a toff with no idea about ordinary people's lives, were it not for the fact that anyone who can count on their fingers would be able to understand why Paddy bought a single. And if Lane really thought it indicated guilt, he would have been forced to conclude that the men who did buy returns were innocent. I think that to attribute his comments to naivety is letting him off too lightly.

The "Who is Gazza?" phenomenon has the effect of letting judges off the hook. Nobody really hates the problems of the criminal justice system go beyond the social awareness of individuals. The whole thing is set up to put people away and keep them there. The police do not exist to ascertain the truth but to find ways of settling people's feuds. Prosecutors work with police and go on to become judges.

Clearly if we had judges who asked questions like, "Gazza, can't he that cry baby who beat his wife up?" we'd be making progress. But the problems of the criminal justice system go beyond the social awareness of individuals. The whole thing is set up to put people away and keep them there. The police do not exist to ascertain the truth but to find ways of settling people's feuds. Prosecutors work with police and go on to become judges.

Recently a very dark book was published by the judge Louis Blom Cooper, attempting to suggest that the Six may have had something to do with it. And he's supposed to be one of the liberals. This sort of

The majority of top judges are drawn from a tiny elite which is why they relate so well to each other

unsustainable title-battle is directed at every single person who ever walks free from court. It is not enough that their lives have already been damaged beyond repair; policemen, judges, barristers, politicians and writers want to preserve forever the fiction that "We know what we're doing." When policemen are tried for fabricating evidence in the wake of a conviction collapsing, the defence is usually that the people cleared were actually guilty, which means that those people are effectively retried in their absence and without legal representation to challenge the allegations made against them. The prosecution of the police officers is handled by the Crown Prosecution Service, who, up until the moment that the wrongful conviction was quashed were arguing that it was safe and that there was no wrong-doing on the part of the police. The system tries itself and, unsurprisingly, it gets off.

Now this might all sound like paranoid nonsense. One must always temper one's fear of the establishment with the reassurance that a lot of them are genuinely not very bright and most of them hate each other a lot more than they hate us. Otherwise we really would be in trouble. But there is a common prejudice that goes from the policeman who pulls over black motorists for no reason, right the way up to the Home Office and the House of Lords: the prejudice that the system is basically a good one, and so it must always cover its arse.

YOUR PENSION: IN YOUR OWN TIME, IN YOUR OWN WAY.

A Merchant Investors pension is an easy, convenient and flexible pension. The charges are low. You can vary your contributions without charge. Pay no commission when you buy direct. No sales person will bother you.

Merchant Investors Assurance

Regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and part of Alliance — one of the world's largest insurers

Mail this coupon to: Merchant Investors Assurance, Company Limited, Freeport, BS 6013, Bristol BS1 2UZ.

MR MRS MISS MS (please circle as appropriate)

INITIALS SURNAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

ARE YOU EMPLOYED? (a) SELF EMPLOYED (b) (please circle)

IF EMPLOYED, are you in your company pension scheme?

YES or NO (please circle)

CALL NOW ON 0800 374857 FOR A BROCHURE

email: mail@merchant-investors.co.uk

http: www.merchant-investors.co.uk

SMALLWEED



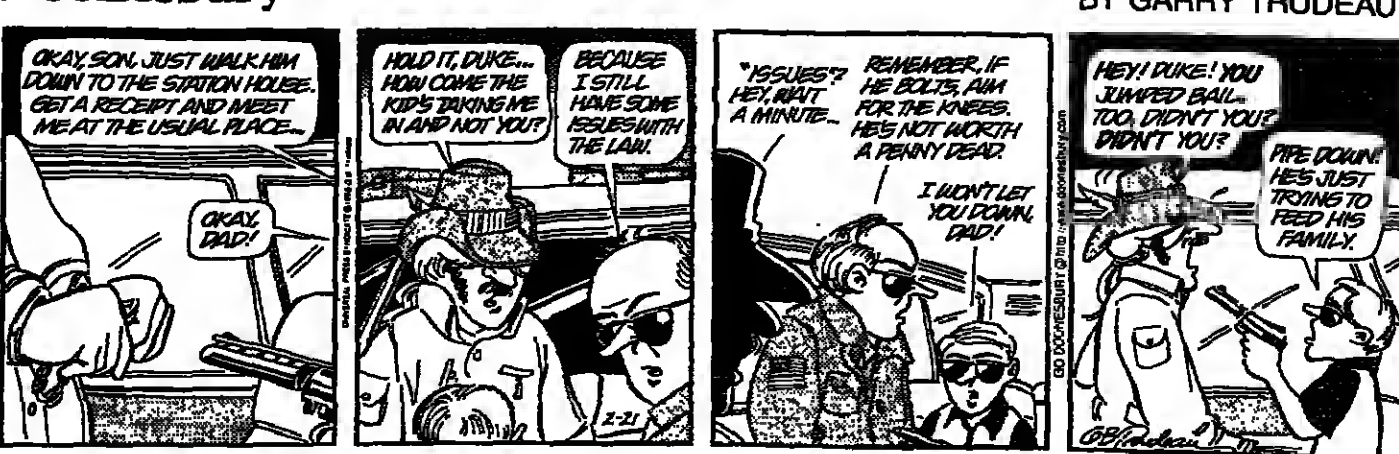
READER in Birmingham questions the existence of the mathematician J J Sylvester and fears his account of his poem of 400 lines, 399 of which rhyme with Rosalind, may be a fabrication. Not so. Sylvester was real, and as for the story about the poem, if that's a fabrication it's somebody else's not mine. All this scepticism derives, I'm afraid, from the image of mathematicians as austere, ultra-logical people whose idea of a jolly evening is to retire to bed early with a good book of log tables. "I've just found the most beautiful size (or cosine) of 35 degrees 30" your mathematician is assumed to screech at a somnolent partner. "Not a patch on the cotangent" the partner will, if a mathematician, dolefully mutter. Yet many mathematicians and practitioners in related disci-

plines are people of fun and huge ingenuity, full of quirky quirks and even of kinky kinks. Charles Babbage, it is said, could not abide organ grinders. So great was his alarm that he attempted to found an Association for the Prohibition of Street Music. The great inventor of calculating machines once wrote to "Tennyson correcting the statement made by the bard in a poem that 'every minute dies a man, every minute one is born.' Were this calculation correct, Babbage argued, the total world population would be in 'perpetual equilibrium'." In the next edition, Tennyson should substitute the couplet: "Every moment dies a man, and one and one sixth is born." Even this, he added, would be slightly inaccurate — the true figure would be 1.167 "but something must of course, be conformed to the laws of metre".

HOW POIGNANT to see the delicate blossoms of spring festooning our trees in February. Here and there, the shy hermit peeps... The Marquis of Vauxmarquies writes: It has come to my notice that over the past few weeks I have failed to appear in your column. Why is this? Is it some form of boycott?

Smallweed penitently confesses: Not so. I just like to

Doonesbury



BY GARRY TRUDEAU

THE BEST OF MY WEEK...

SAYS SCULPTOR ANTONY GORRELEY: "It was Sunday morning up at Glastonbury watching my Angel of the North being hoisted into place. I hadn't seen the body standing up before. I was excited and anxious. What worried me most was that the proportions just wouldn't work. The more vertical the sculpture, the more euphoric I became — it really was meant to be this size: all the sections that had looked so queer on the 1/10 model suddenly had clarity and purpose: we had made a work!"

0150 410 410

Now it's OK to play away

So the Army is lifting its ban on extra-marital affairs. Does that mean, **Libby Brooks** asks, that adultery is now acceptable behaviour for everybody?

As the seventh commandment in danger of losing its hellfire quotient? Traditionalists were left chomping on their Air Force brasserie as the Army announced a relaxation of its ban on extra-marital affairs in a new liberalised code of conduct. Only affairs within the military organisation are to remain unacceptable — a Ministry of Defence spokesperson noted that it was now "unrealistic" to outlaw all infidelity. Adultery has never been such a common currency. Indeed it now appears to be the meat and veg of the public confessional, reserved for the most

pedestrian of Oprah episodes. Yesterday, bigamist Hayley Bates, married to two shipmates on the Royal Yacht Britannia, was revealed as a "serial bride" and alleged serial adulteress. The worst of her fourth husband, David Wigmore, could summon, after claiming that Bates was unfaithful to him after only one year of marriage, was that "she just loves getting married."

Earlier this month actress Sarah Miles, who married playwright Robert Bolt twice, made the passionate claim in the Daily Telegraph that an affair need not destroy a family. "Real love is far greater than mere posses-

sion, completely eclipsing jealousy," she opined. "For the sake of the children, it might be more compassionate discreetly to take a mistress or a lover during the turbulent times when we seem to be unable to differentiate between lust and love... Trivial dalliances should not deprive children of their rights to a clear, safe passage provided by the framework of a family."

The definition of adultery has altered radically since the Biblical invitation to cast the first stone. Last year's Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles Survey confirmed that men in higher social and economic classes were

more likely to be unfaithful (although men are generally more likely to petition for divorce on grounds of adultery). Liz Hurley, Jerry Hall and Pamela Anderson all discovered that sex appeal and a career hold no guarantees in the fickle arena of fidelity. And, as increasing numbers of modern couples enjoy committed relationships without the accompanying legalities, the freedom of living in sin brings its own confusions when one partner sins with another.

The statistics are at best equivocal. While 90 per cent of individuals enter a marriage expecting to remain faithful to their spouses, 60 per cent of men and 40 per cent of women will have an affair during the relationship. Zella West-Meads, author of *To Love, Honour & Betray: Why Affairs Happen And How To Survive Them*, worked for the marriage guidance organisation Relate for over 20 years. She believes that our approach to fidelity is more tra-

ditional than pre-millennial moral relativism might allow.

"One only has to look at our attitudes to cabinet ministers who have affairs to see that we are still extremely judgmental. Most people still see fidelity as very important. But as the relationship continues, the opportunities for temptation increase."

West-Meads argues that the traditional profile of the cheating mid-life-crisis husband is changing. "Women have higher expectations. They want a man who is emotionally committed and a good lover, not simply a good provider. As more women enter the workplace, the opportunities for infidelity, if they are dissatisfied, increase."

Nevertheless, she says, the reasons given for affairs remain distinctly gendered. "Men say that, with care, the affair won't hurt their marriage. Women argue that they are compelled by emotions rather than desire for good sex and the excitement of the liaison. Men are better at compartmentalising their emotions."

But psychotherapist Susie Orbach argues that "Men still define themselves through sex. Having more sex is a way of bolstering their egos, while for

women it still involves feelings of attachment. Men have less difficulty accepting their own infidelity, but are threatened of when their lovers indulge. There is more guilt on the woman's part. The act of betrayal consciously costs her more."

Increasing awareness of infidelity may have left the modern adulterer with a sense of community but the consequences remain unaltered. Despite the relaxation and progression of sexual mores in all other aspects of relationships, betrayal continues to invoke the moral censor. Sharon Breen of marriage and partnership research charity, One Plus One, notes: "There's been a move to a romantic ideal of marriage, away from the idea of joining two families; also changing attitudes to sex, as an intimate representation of identity. When your partner has done that with someone else, it is very hard to forgive."

Predictably perhaps, the nineties couple appears monogamous in theory if grudgingly promiscuous in practice. To err is human, to forgive is to recognise that, as with the ark, human beings work best in twos. As Sarah Miles so eloquently puts it: "Fidelity is what we all strive for, but does it have to be all or nothing?"

What's it like to spend 13 years in a South American jail? **Darius Bazargan** finds out from someone who has been there and what can be done to help British prisoners abroad

Doing porridge... prisoners complaining about the chow in the Lima jail, right, where Steve Bronstein (below left) served time; below right, Karen Henderson waits in a Moscow jail before sentencing

PHOTOGRAPHS: SARAH LARSON (RIGHT); MARK READ (BELOW LEFT); DAVID BRALUCH



God's hell on Earth

It was meant to be an easy run; seven and a half kilos of cocaine from Peru to California, disguised in re-sealed duty-free goods and pre-sold for nearly half a million dollars wholesale. Because it was early Christmas and the market was tight, Steve Bronstein stood to make a double cut; as much as \$200,000 commission on the kilo, \$150,000 in total.

In 1981, that was big money and he would have been well on the way to realising his dream of opening a small jazz-based record label. But it didn't work out like that.

"I was arrested on December 18 1981 at Jorge Chavez airport in Lima. It was 11.30 at night," Steve says over a beer in a tapas bar in north London. It all seems a far cry from Peru and the story Steve is telling for the first time, 16 years after it began.

"There are only two ways of coming through when you get involved in this kind of thing: either you win or you lose, and I never expected to be searched leaving Peru. You freeze and go into shock. It actually takes a few days to come out of it. To realise that you are gone. Busted. You know that you can forget about civilisation for a long time."

He served 13 years in a Peruvian jail — plenty of time to reflect on what a fool he'd been. Steve joined the ranks of the roughly 2,000 British nationals incarcerated abroad in frequently appalling conditions. He spent most of his sentences in Lima's notorious San Juan de Lurigancho prison, an institution known locally as "God's Hell on Earth."

It was designed to house 1,800 inmates, but is now home to over 5,000 men. According to local press reports, of the 4,944 inmates held in the prison, only 238 had actually been sentenced.

Steve waited almost three years for his case to go to court; his trial consisted of short sessions spread out over 26 weeks — with his defence limited to just 10 minutes.

And then there were the prison conditions to endure. "The guards are run the prisons. The guards are only on the perimeters to keep you

in and when they do come into the prison grounds, they come in mobbed and heavily armed. The whole structure of the prison — discipline, distribution of what food the Peruvian government provides, ownership of the cells — is all in the hands of prisoners.

"You have to buy everything inside; food, clothes, bedding — everything. Cells are traded as real estate. Peruvian prisoners with lots of money on the outside might own 40 or 50 cells in a block of 60, and they sell them to you."

Prisoners who have no ready cash are forced to live on the patio, in the *terro-nada* (no man's land) which doubles up as a rubbish tip. It's fly-and-mosquito infested, and populated by the lowest street criminals who will ever get in the *pabellones* (cell blocks) because the pabellones don't want them.

Some Britons, like Karen Henderson who was released from a Moscow jail earlier this month after serving only two years of her six-year sentence for cocaine smuggling, are relatively lucky in that they have attracted beneficial media coverage. Most, though, have traditionally received scant attention, either from the British press or from successive governments.

There are winds of change at the Foreign Office, where the minister, Baroness Symons, insists that New Labour is determined to bump the cause up the political agenda.

"This administration recognises that when we talk about human rights we are not just talking about questions of international democracy, or how legal systems work. We are also talking about individuals," she says. A landable ambition, but bringing the spirit of Robin Cook's ethical foreign policy to a prison like Lurigancho — where, according to Steve Bronstein, killings of inmates and gang warfare are common — is no easy task.

"The body is just picked up in a blanket, thrown out in front of the cell block, carried away by some of the cleaners and taken to the city morgue where it's disposed of. If there is no family to claim it, it goes into a communal grave and that's the end of the matter."

Another problem in the Latin

American prison system is chronic drug abuse — in particular a form of cocaine known as *pasta basica* or *pasta*. A cheap and highly addictive smokeable paste, PBC is the raw form of cocaine hydrochloride, the snuffable powder favoured by drug users in Peru. If you smear it on stainless steel, it will turn it black. Combined with the tuberculosis epidemics that sweep through South American jails, it can be deadly.

In a letter from Lurigancho in September 1993, a convicted British drug trafficker, Brian Tristram, from Bedford, described his failing health. "I am very concerned. Medical facilities in Lurigancho are very basic to say the least — my cellulite died recently but I've been unable to find out why I have several medical problems, including epilepsy, which is fairly well under control as I buy regular medication via the embassy, a problem with my left eye, which the embassy doctor

describes as conjunctivitis with a corneal ulcer. I've had blurred vision for about the last three years. The doctor says surgery is necessary but it's impossible to arrange, even if I could afford it."

Tristram admitted an addiction to cocaine "paste". "I would like very much to stop smoking paste. But what with the hopelessness of my situation, I do not have the will power." Four months later, he suffered a massive stroke. In August 1994 he died from crack-related tuberculosis; 11 months later, his co-defendant, John Boxall, also from Bedford, died in another TB epidemic. Neither death received coverage in the British press.

The London-based charity Prisoners Abroad provides information, advice and support for prisoners and their families. Its executive director, Carlo Lauranz, said that about two-thirds of the charity's clients were imprisoned for drug-related offences, and that

this severely damages public sympathy and interest in their plight.

"Many people believe that if you've committed a crime, you should do the time in that country. They make the assumption that everyone's starting at the same point but that's clearly not the case. An inhabitant of Rio will have all their loved ones around them, they will have access to home-cooked food, clothes and visits, and speak the language. Foreigners by contrast don't have any support and are also at a major disadvantage in terms of the violent pecking order within the prisons."

Brian Tristram knew all about that, as his letter from Lurigancho testified: "I've been beaten with lengths of wood and heavy-duty electric cable. On one occasion I was attacked with an 18-inch strip of metal that had been fashioned into

a home-made knife." Such horror stories are common. In May 1998 Sharon Smith, aged 18, from Islington, was arrested at Rio International Airport in Brazil. She was caught in possession of three-and-a-half kilos of cocaine. She claimed she was set up as a decoy, the court didn't believe her and she was sentenced to eight years in Rio's Bangu prison.

"In October 1996 my daughter phoned to complain about her money being taken by one of the female guards," her father, Dave, said. "The phone was suddenly put down on me and my daughter was taken to a cell by this guard who then attacked. My daughter retaliated and the guard then returned with four others. They held my daughter down on the cell bed and beat her with sticks, breaking her ribs and some teeth. Her legs were severely swollen and the beating continued for some time."

Dave Smith has been a strident critic of what he perceives to be government inactivity in his daughter's case. But there are clear limits on what the British authorities can do. Many naive Britons who end up in foreign prisons assume that a British passport, backed up by a visit from the Consul, will get them out. It won't.

Steve Bronstein, who now works as a volunteer at Prisoners Abroad, understands the need for limits. "It's very tricky because if someone goes outside his country knowingly to commit a crime in a foreign country, what right has the guy got to scream that the government is ignoring him? The British government never asked him to get involved in that particular line of business, and he's getting exactly the same treatment as a national of the country he's held in."

But shouldn't British nationals be allowed to serve their sentences back in this country? This is one area in which the Foreign Office hopes to make progress. "People may lose their civil rights when they are in prison abroad. They don't lose their humanitarian rights," said Baroness Symons. "We do want to ensure that people have an opportunity to serve their sentences at home."

So far, however, progress has been slow. Only 21 British nationals were repatriated last year. Even when Britons are let out of the prison gates in Lima, or Bangkok or Los Angeles, their troubles do not stop there. Under the previous Conservative government, Peter Lilley introduced the Habitual Residence Test, a move designed to stop so-called "dole tourism," where other EU nationals claimed welfare benefits in Britain.

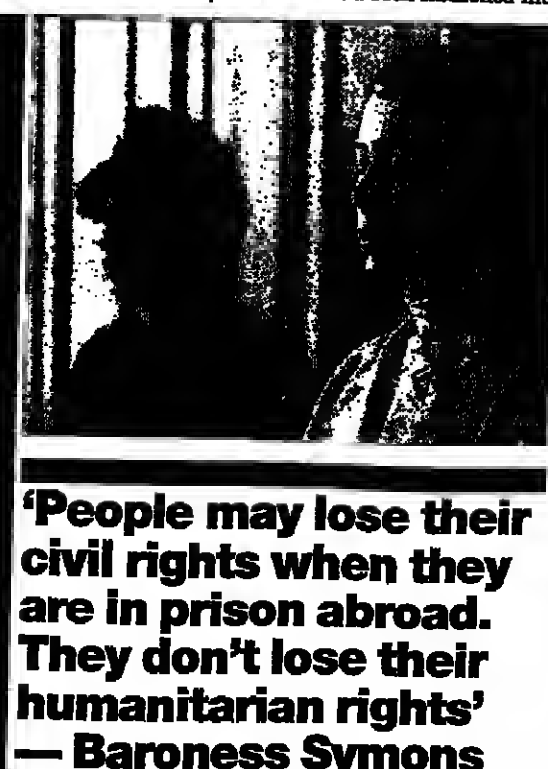
The result is that many prisoners deported back to Britain at the end of their sentence are prevented from claiming social security, and find themselves without friends, a home and financial support, living on the streets. One of them is David Gilmore, who served five years in Texas for breaking a divorce court ruling and taking a car and a safe from his ex-wife. His return home was far from easy. "I was in the British Army I got an honourable discharge from the Fifth Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards, but it doesn't mean anything because of the Habitual Residence Test. I told them 'I am British'. They said 'prove it', he said.

"I feel as though I have got a right. If I had got refugee status, I'd have been given furniture and everything. But I didn't. A British citizen doesn't have any rights from what I can see."

Back in the bar in north London, Steve finishes his beer and contemplates the wreckage of his life. "I still get flashbacks and have to sleep with the radio and television on at the same time, because the noise level in Peruvian jails is constant and silence is synonymous with danger. One night my electric key went and the radio and telly went off. I just shot up in bed in a cold sweat — I still haven't lost that," he says. "But I am glad to be out of there, and I am very glad to be fighting to try to get other people home and to resettle them. Things get better and I can only hope it will stay that way."

© Darius Bazargan 1998

Prisoners Abroad can be contacted at 82 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4RR or on 0171-633-3467.



'People may lose their civil rights when they are in prison abroad. They don't lose their humanitarian rights' — Baroness Symons

THE BEST OF MY WEEK

Chepstow card

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15	1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15

1.15 Persian War Premier Novice Hurdle
2m 4f 110yds £9,825 (11 declared)
1.15 Persian War Premier Novice Hurdle
2m 4f 110yds £9,825 (11 declared)
1.15 Persian War Premier Novice Hurdle
2m 4f 110yds £9,825 (11 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15	1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15

1.45 M & N Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 110yds £8,588 (14 declared)
1.45 M & N Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 110yds £8,588 (14 declared)
1.45 M & N Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 110yds £8,588 (14 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15	1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15

2.15 John Hughes Grand National Trial
Handicap Chase
3m 2f 110yds £13,227 (11 declared)
2.15 John Hughes Grand National Trial
Handicap Chase
3m 2f 110yds £13,227 (11 declared)
2.15 John Hughes Grand National Trial
Handicap Chase
3m 2f 110yds £13,227 (11 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15	1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15

2.45 Tony Preston Fledgling Chase
2m 3f 110yds £7,521 (7 declared)
2.45 Tony Preston Fledgling Chase
2m 3f 110yds £7,521 (7 declared)
2.45 Tony Preston Fledgling Chase
2m 3f 110yds £7,521 (7 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15	1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15

3.15 E & F Novice Hurdle
2m 110yds £2,612 (10 declared)
3.15 E & F Novice Hurdle
2m 110yds £2,612 (10 declared)
3.15 E & F Novice Hurdle
2m 110yds £2,612 (10 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15	1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15

3.45 Aspiring Champions Novice Chase
3m 2f 450yds £5,000 (10 declared)
3.45 Aspiring Champions Novice Chase
3m 2f 450yds £5,000 (10 declared)
3.45 Aspiring Champions Novice Chase
3m 2f 450yds £5,000 (10 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15	1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15

4.15 Flyover Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
4.15 Flyover Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
4.15 Flyover Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15	1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15

4.45 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
4.45 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
4.45 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15	1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15

4.75 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
4.75 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
4.75 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15	1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15

5.05 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
5.05 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
5.05 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15	1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15

5.35 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
5.35 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
5.35 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15	1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15

5.65 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
5.65 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
5.65 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15	1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15

5.95 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
5.95 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
5.95 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15	1.15 1.45 2.15 2.45 3.15 3.45 4.15

6.25 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
6.25 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
6.25 Flying Fox Handicap Hurdle
3m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

Racing

TV pundit claims Fallon cheated

Champion Flat jockey comes under fire in the High Court. Ken Oliver reports

RACING was delivered another body blow yesterday when it was alleged that the champion Flat jockey Kieren Fallon stopped a horse from having a winning chance. After recent police inquiries into alleged doping and race-fixing, the sports' tarnished image took a further knock in the High Court in London when the Channel 4 racing presenter, Derek Thompson, said that Fallon told him he was ordered to "stop" the jockey from winning the 1995 Epsom Derby. Thompson was giving evidence on behalf of The Sporting Life, which is fighting an libel action over "cheating" allegations brought by Fallon, the trainer Lynda Ramsden and her husband Jack. They are suing over an "insane verbal onslaught" in an unsigned editorial in May 1995, the day after Top Cees won the Chester Cup. It said the Ramsdens and Fallon con-

spired to deceive the racing public by deliberately not trying to win the Swaffham Handicap three weeks earlier. The Sporting Life publisher, Mirror Group Newspapers, denies libel. It says the article is justified and fair comment on a "scandal" that was a matter of public interest. The newspaper's counsel, Richard Hartley QC, asked Thompson for his reaction to the result of the Swaffham Handicap. Thompson, who was subpoenaed on his return from working in Dubai on Monday, said he felt that the horse "probably should have finished an awful lot closer with a more forceful ride, and probably should have won." On the night after the race he was dining with friends at The Old Plough, near Newmarket, when he saw Fallon. He told Mr Justice Morland and the jury: "I don't want to repeat this in open court, which is why I've tried to stop it coming to open court, be-

cause it was said to me in confidence. "I was asking, 'What happened with Top Cees this afternoon as I thought he would win' and Kieren's words were: 'Yes, I thought the horse would win his well, but when I got into the paddock Jack told me to stop it'." Thompson said that he mentioned the conversation to a couple of people at the next morning's Channel 4 production meeting and suggested it might be worth interviewing Fallon. "Kieren was obviously quite reluctant - he was being hounded by the press, if that's the right word, so I said it will do you good to talk about it. I did say that what was said last night in The Plough will not come out and I will look after you."

Patrick Milmo QC, for the Ramsdens and Fallon, opened his cross-examination by saying: "What you have just told the court about Kieren Fallon is an outrageous lie - that's right, is it not?" Thompson replied: "If you think so, that's up to you. But it's not." Milmo said Thompson was faced with telling the truth that nothing of consequence had happened, or of telling lies which would secure his position with Channel 4 but "would probably ruin the career of one of the best jockeys in England."

Thompson said that was a "totally ridiculous" statement. "I have the greatest respect for Kieren Fallon as one of the finest horsemen in the world and the last thing I want to do is siting here."

The case continues on Monday.

Linden's Lotto looks set to draw

LINDEN'S LOTTO, well-lacked in mid-week from 9-1, can land a gamble in today's TotE Elder Chase (3.05) at Newcastle, writes Tony Paley. The selection won three handicaps in the space of a month from mid-December with enough in hand to suggest he is still fairly handi-

capped, including when staying on well at Newcastle to beat Another Venture over three miles and six furlongs. His trainer, Gordon Richards, immediately announced today's race as his target and Linden's Lotto's subsequent defeat at Ayr can be put down to the step back to an inadequate two-and-a-half miles.

Warwick runners and riders

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10	2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10

2.05 Michael Pave Legal Novice Chase
3m 2f 253yds (10 declared)
2.05 Michael Pave Legal Novice Chase
3m 2f 253yds (10 declared)
2.05 Michael Pave Legal Novice Chase
3m 2f 253yds (10 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10	2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10

2.35 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
2.35 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
2.35 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10	2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10

3.10 Michael Pave Sales Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
3.10 Michael Pave Sales Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
3.10 Michael Pave Sales Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10	2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10

3.40 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
3.40 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
3.40 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10	2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10

4.10 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
4.10 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
4.10 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10	2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10

4.40 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
4.40 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
4.40 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10	2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10

5.10 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
5.10 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
5.10 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10	2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10

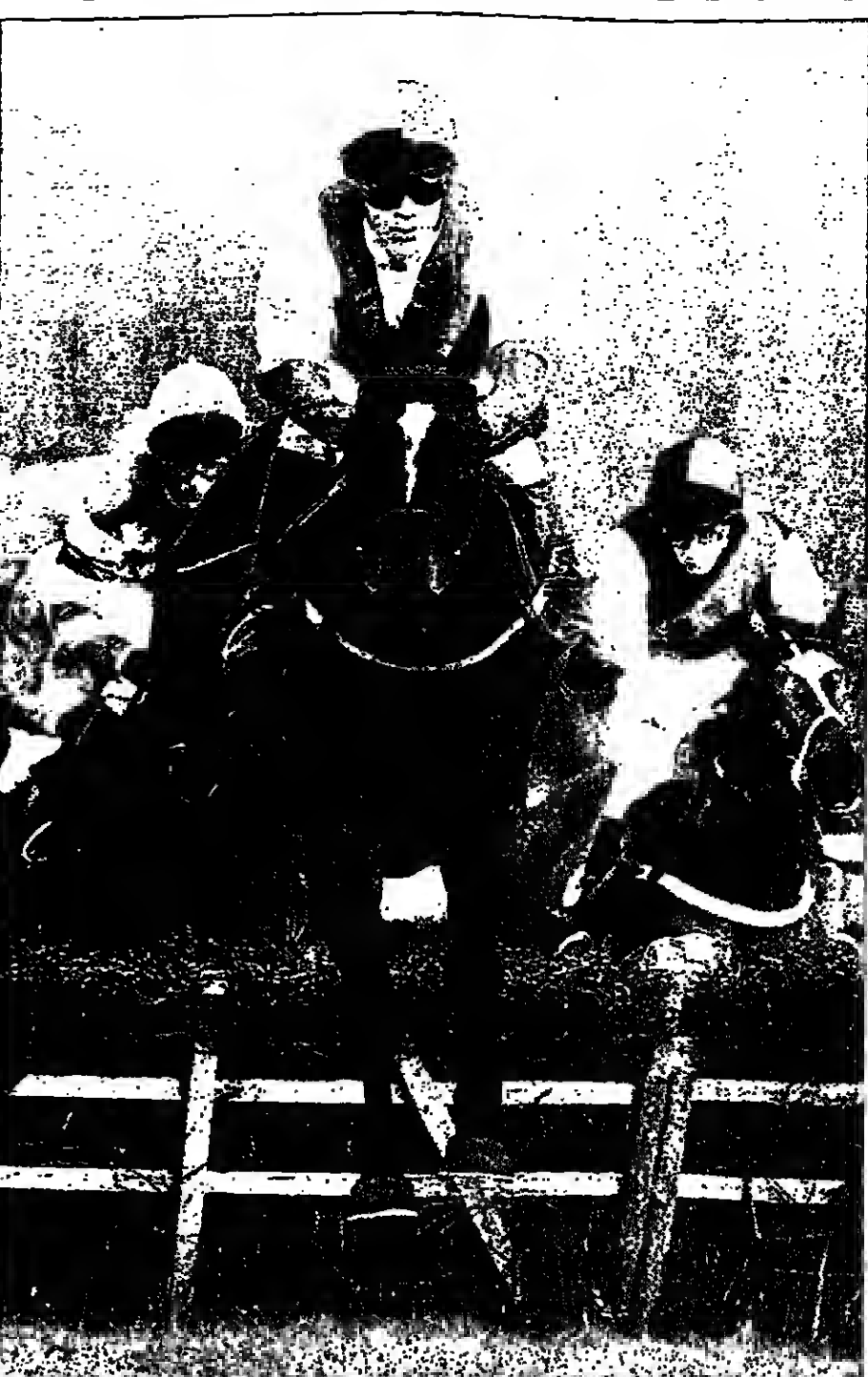
5.40 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
5.40 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
5.40 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10	2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10

5.70 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
5.70 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
5.70 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10	2.05 2.35 3.10 3.40 4.10 4.40 5.10

6.00 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
6.00 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
6.00 Michael Pave Group Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)



Grade one... Carl Llewellyn clears the final hurdle on his way to victory on Upgrade at Sandown yesterday.

Newcastle Jackpot card

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35	1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35

1.30 Advertiser Racecourse Catering Novice Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
1.30 Advertiser Racecourse Catering Novice Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
1.30 Advertiser Racecourse Catering Novice Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35	1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35

2.00 Fairfry Racecourse Novice Chase
3m 2f 450yds (10 declared)
2.00 Fairfry Racecourse Novice Chase
3m 2f 450yds (10 declared)
2.00 Fairfry Racecourse Novice Chase
3m 2f 450yds (10 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35	1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35

2.30 Bob Gorman Signs Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
2.30 Bob Gorman Signs Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
2.30 Bob Gorman Signs Handicap Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35	1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35

3.05 Tote Elder Handicap Chase
3m 2f 450yds (10 declared)
3.05 Tote Elder Handicap Chase
3m 2f 450yds (10 declared)
3.05 Tote Elder Handicap Chase
3m 2f 450yds (10 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35	1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35

3.35 Northumbrian Water St Oswald's Hospice Novice Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
3.35 Northumbrian Water St Oswald's Hospice Novice Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
3.35 Northumbrian Water St Oswald's Hospice Novice Hurdle
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35	1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35

4.05 The Camels Flyer Handicap Chase
3m 2f 450yds (10 declared)
4.05 The Camels Flyer Handicap Chase
3m 2f 450yds (10 declared)
4.05 The Camels Flyer Handicap Chase
3m 2f 450yds (10 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35	1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35

4.35 RACING CHANNEL CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
4.35 RACING CHANNEL CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
4.35 RACING CHANNEL CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35	1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35

4.65 RACING CHANNEL CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
4.65 RACING CHANNEL CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
4.65 RACING CHANNEL CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

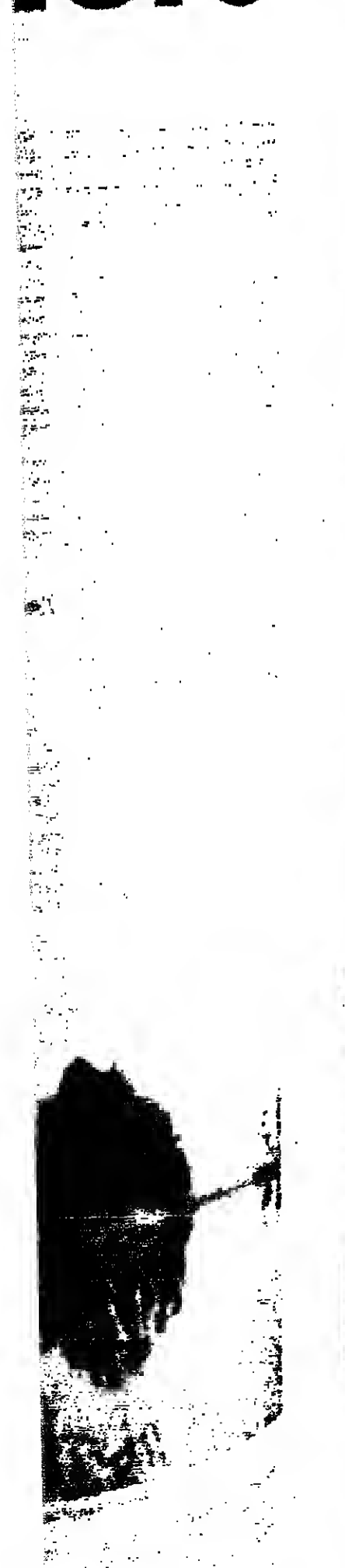
TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35	1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35

4.95 RACING CHANNEL CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
4.95 RACING CHANNEL CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
4.95 RACING CHANNEL CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35	1.30 2.00 2.30 3.05 3.35 4.05 4.35

5.25 RACING CHANNEL CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
5.25 RACING CHANNEL CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)
5.25 RACING CHANNEL CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 4f 475yds (15 declared)

Luke Harding



KEEPING TRACK
0891 222 +

Cricket

Places up for grabs in the driest of dry runs

Mike Selvey in drought-hit Guyana on England's latest selection dilemma

THE groundsman at the Everest Cricket Club looked at his pitch, its grassless surface darkened from a sprinkling he had just given it, and shrugged and insisted that by the start of England's three-day match against Guyana today, it would be bone dry, hard and crack-fall of runs.

El Nino, he said in explanation. Georgetown has had no precipitation of consequence since August and even the manatees (hippo-like creatures) in the zoological gardens adjacent to the Test ground, Bourda, have no water to drink.

Since the tour began, England have had just one pitch — at Chedwin Park in Jamaica — that has not been awkward for batsmen, and with less than a week to go



On the Bourda... Mike Atherton stretching during a net session at Guyana's Test ground

before the fourth Test, they need some quality practice. This one looks to be perfect. After two of the most intense Tests imaginable, a balance has to be drawn between maintaining form, constructive rest, and keeping those who have not been playing in practice. Not everyone can be kept entirely happy, as Mark Ramprakash has found out, but the side who are likely to feast on the pitch today come close to realising that balance.

So there will be a chance for the three Test seamers — Angus Fraser, Dean Headley and Andy Caddick — to rest, while Alec Stewart will also have the game off providing he is satisfied the practice facilities at Bourda are of sufficient quality for him to maintain his standards. Graham

Thorpe is fighting 'flu symptoms so he will miss out, too. John Crawley plays, but there is little doubt that he is under pressure, particularly now that Mark Butcher has made a case for himself: good performances from Ramprakash, or Adam Hobbins, could yet see Crawley sidelined come the Test.

Now does the inclusion of Caddick necessarily mean that he is being saved for the next Test. He, too, is under scrutiny after his erratic efforts at Queen's Park Oval. When it came to the crunch, Mike Atherton relied on Fraser and Andy Caddick — to rest, while Alec Stewart will also have the game off providing he is satisfied the practice facilities at Bourda are of sufficient quality for him to maintain his standards. Graham

opening should they state a sufficiently strong case. With Carl Hooper defying the West Indies Cricket Board by staying in Trinidad, the Guyana side will be led by Shivnarine Chanderpaul. Interest will centre on two batsmen, Ramprakash and Clayton Lambert, at opposite ends of their careers.

Sarwan represented West Indies last winter on both the A-tour of South Africa and the Under-19 World Cup, and comes with glowing references. Lambert, by contrast, has just turned 36, and appears to have had a few too many fish suppers since his single Test at the Oval seven years ago.

But he is being touted as a contender to replace Stuart Williams as opener in the next Test. If the selectors

really are considering going down that route, then West Indies batting must be in a parlous state. Mervyn Dymally, who has played three Tests, rarely looked as uncertain again, pacing his innings intelligently to finish 88 not out from 136 balls.

Dougie Brown, who bowled his 1000th ball in the first day, by three wickets with one to spare as Sri Lanka took an unassailable 3-0 lead in the three-match series.

This was a much improved England showing in the field but their total of 186 was about 25 runs short of what they would have wanted on a slow pitch. But they defended the total with enthusiasm before Sri Lanka's eighth-wicket pair of Russell Arnold and Pabudu Dassanayake settled matters with an unbeaten stand of 80 in nine overs.

Nobody can call me sexist — least of all those lovely ladies

DAVE PODMORE yields to no one in his condemnation of sexist practices in the game of cricket. And to be fair, no one has shown more commitment than myself to involving the fair sex in the game at all levels. I've married three lovely ladies for a start, and in Jacqui I have a wonderful new fiancée. No one will defend more strenuously the right of an attractive young woman like Jacqui to attend a day's play wearing a smart outfit and neat make-up. It brightens the play up and gives the Sky boys something to cut away to in between deliveries.

But this is not to say that I'm in favour of them completely taking over the whole game, which on the face of it is what is starting to happen. First there was the woman commentator in the last Test. Don't get me wrong — I'm all in favour of it but they should have a sense of humour about their work. Look, if you're on the air with Aggers and Blowers joshing away, what's more natural than that you're going to get joshed.

"Knockers". I've apologised to the lady in question and sent her a bunch of flowers and a couple of spare chocolate mints off my pillow. End of story as far as I'm concerned. However, is the identity of the mystery middle-aged woman stalker at Port of Spain. In all honesty, I have to hold my hand up and reveal it was me taking a short cut to the hotel pool. When you've been put down as long as I have, you tend to get a bit overdeveloped in the pectoral department.

But as I say, Pod's a fem!



It's in the blood. My old mum was a sponsor's girl back in the Fifties. She used to walk around the boundary at Ilkeston in a French maid's outfit with a tray of Woodbines. With pin-point accuracy, she'd lob packets to the punters very much as Jumbo the peanut vendor did in Trinidad last week. I only I'd inherited her throwing arm instead of my old man's.

But one thing she never did was moan about being excluded from the corridors of power. I refer of course to the forthcoming vote at Lord's concerning the proposed admission to the MCC of women (or wimpos as we call them in the East Midlands). This has been brewing up for some time. Sir Tim Rice and Ms Germaine Greer put their politically correct heads together after recording an episode of *Call My Bluff* and look what happens. Eighteen thousand poor old sods get spoken up from their winter hibernation to be asked, "Do you want to let the boiler-suited brigade into the Long Room, yes or yes?"

Well, you can't stop history. And if that's the only way for Lord's to qualify for a Lottery, then so be it. But Pod proposes a few measures to make this hither-pitter a little easier to swallow.

Rule 1.1: Every application from a member of the female

specifies to be accompanied by two 10 x 8 photos for approval by the appropriate committee. Bearing in mind, of course, that even with the "fast track" admission, it'll be 20 years before they get in and most of them are going to be past their best.

Rule 1.2: The girls are going to have to conform to a strict dress code. The wearing of trousers will be permitted but they must be shiny in the seat and made of at least 50 per cent nylon. The legs should be of slightly uneven length and short enough to reveal two inches of sock and/or white ankle, with a straggly bit of thread dangling from one turn-up. A good handful of loose change will be carried in the pocket and jingled during awkward conversational lulls.

Rule 1.3: Shirts will display spots of blood where the collar meets the neck, a consequence of careless shaving.

Rule 1.4: Most importantly, ties must be worn at all times and should contain evidence of a full English breakfast (ask the lovely Casey Joneses purchased at Paddington).

Rule 1.5: When a lady is offered a drink by another lady in the members' bar, she will reply with the words, "You're a gentleman and a soldier." These far-reaching proposals should at least scotch the idea that the average cricketer thinks a woman's place is rolling around on a marble floor. And they should get me some brownie points when Jacqui and the other ladies and fiancées arrive on the big silver bird next week. (If you're reading this, love, don't forget to set the video for *Granada Men and Motors*).

Sri Lanka A v England A: second one-day international

Knight and Co fall short

David Hopps in Matsara

AFTER their success in the Test series, England A have found Sri Lanka's verve in the one-day game difficult to restrain. Mailed in the opening match at Matara, they suffered a much narrower defeat yesterday, by three wickets with one to spare as Sri Lanka took an unassailable 3-0 lead in the three-match series.

This was a much improved England showing in the field but their total of 186 was about 25 runs short of what they would have wanted on a slow pitch. But they defended the total with enthusiasm before Sri Lanka's eighth-wicket pair of Russell Arnold and Pabudu Dassanayake settled matters with an unbeaten stand of 80 in nine overs.

With 29 still needed by Sri Lanka from the last five overs Mark Kalpathy, who replaced Maddy, immediately conceded 11 in an over strewn with three misfields. Ashley Giles, suffering a rare off day, was swung over midwicket by Dassanayake for the winning boundary.

Owais Shah was the only England batsman to look entirely settled, striking 66 from 83 balls before he became one of four victims for the impressive left-arm spinner Niroshan Bandula. Chandra's leg-spin befuddled the tail.

Even Shah had some regrets, being involved in a mix-up which led to the run out of Nick Knight, well short of his ground after being sent back, for 29. In batting terms England's captain has had that sort of luck all tour.

With 29 still needed by Sri Lanka from the last five overs Mark Kalpathy, who replaced Maddy, immediately conceded 11 in an over strewn with three misfields. Ashley Giles, suffering a rare off day, was swung over midwicket by Dassanayake for the winning boundary.

Owais Shah was the only England batsman to look entirely settled, striking 66 from 83 balls before he became one of four victims for the impressive left-arm spinner Niroshan Bandula. Chandra's leg-spin befuddled the tail.

Even Shah had some regrets, being involved in a mix-up which led to the run out of Nick Knight, well short of his ground after being sent back, for 29. In batting terms England's captain has had that sort of luck all tour.

Results

THE colours made famous by 1986 Grand National hero West Tip are being brought to prominence again by Stormy Passage. The son of Strong Gale has only raced 10 times, but has been out of the frame only three times.

He was again impressive at Sandown yesterday with a faultless round to defeat odds-on favourite Cheryl's Lad by nine lengths.

SANDOWN
1.45 (5m Hbbs) 1. MOUNTAIN STORM, M. A. Fitzpatrick (10) 15.5, 16.5, 17.5, 18.5, 19.5, 20.5, 21.5, 22.5, 23.5, 24.5, 25.5, 26.5, 27.5, 28.5, 29.5, 30.5, 31.5, 32.5, 33.5, 34.5, 35.5, 36.5, 37.5, 38.5, 39.5, 40.5, 41.5, 42.5, 43.5, 44.5, 45.5, 46.5, 47.5, 48.5, 49.5, 50.5, 51.5, 52.5, 53.5, 54.5, 55.5, 56.5, 57.5, 58.5, 59.5, 60.5, 61.5, 62.5, 63.5, 64.5, 65.5, 66.5, 67.5, 68.5, 69.5, 70.5, 71.5, 72.5, 73.5, 74.5, 75.5, 76.5, 77.5, 78.5, 79.5, 80.5, 81.5, 82.5, 83.5, 84.5, 85.5, 86.5, 87.5, 88.5, 89.5, 90.5, 91.5, 92.5, 93.5, 94.5, 95.5, 96.5, 97.5, 98.5, 99.5, 100.5, 101.5, 102.5, 103.5, 104.5, 105.5, 106.5, 107.5, 108.5, 109.5, 110.5, 111.5, 112.5, 113.5, 114.5, 115.5, 116.5, 117.5, 118.5, 119.5, 120.5, 121.5, 122.5, 123.5, 124.5, 125.5, 126.5, 127.5, 128.5, 129.5, 130.5, 131.5, 132.5, 133.5, 134.5, 135.5, 136.5, 137.5, 138.5, 139.5, 140.5, 141.5, 142.5, 143.5, 144.5, 145.5, 146.5, 147.5, 148.5, 149.5, 150.5, 151.5, 152.5, 153.5, 154.5, 155.5, 156.5, 157.5, 158.5, 159.5, 160.5, 161.5, 162.5, 163.5, 164.5, 165.5, 166.5, 167.5, 168.5, 169.5, 170.5, 171.5, 172.5, 173.5, 174.5, 175.5, 176.5, 177.5, 178.5, 179.5, 180.5, 181.5, 182.5, 183.5, 184.5, 185.5, 186.5, 187.5, 188.5, 189.5, 190.5, 191.5, 192.5, 193.5, 194.5, 195.5, 196.5, 197.5, 198.5, 199.5, 200.5, 201.5, 202.5, 203.5, 204.5, 205.5, 206.5, 207.5, 208.5, 209.5, 210.5, 211.5, 212.5, 213.5, 214.5, 215.5, 216.5, 217.5, 218.5, 219.5, 220.5, 221.5, 222.5, 223.5, 224.5, 225.5, 226.5, 227.5, 228.5, 229.5, 230.5, 231.5, 232.5, 233.5, 234.5, 235.5, 236.5, 237.5, 238.5, 239.5, 240.5, 241.5, 242.5, 243.5, 244.5, 245.5, 246.5, 247.5, 248.5, 249.5, 250.5, 251.5, 252.5, 253.5, 254.5, 255.5, 256.5, 257.5, 258.5, 259.5, 260.5, 261.5, 262.5, 263.5, 264.5, 265.5, 266.5, 267.5, 268.5, 269.5, 270.5, 271.5, 272.5, 273.5, 274.5, 275.5, 276.5, 277.5, 278.5, 279.5, 280.5, 281.5, 282.5, 283.5, 284.5, 285.5, 286.5, 287.5, 288.5, 289.5, 290.5, 291.5, 292.5, 293.5, 294.5, 295.5, 296.5, 297.5, 298.5, 299.5, 300.5, 301.5, 302.5, 303.5, 304.5, 305.5, 306.5, 307.5, 308.5, 309.5, 310.5, 311.5, 312.5, 313.5, 314.5, 315.5, 316.5, 317.5, 318.5, 319.5, 320.5, 321.5, 322.5, 323.5, 324.5, 325.5, 326.5, 327.5, 328.5, 329.5, 330.5, 331.5, 332.5, 333.5, 334.5, 335.5, 336.5, 337.5, 338.5, 339.5, 340.5, 341.5, 342.5, 343.5, 344.5, 345.5, 346.5, 347.5, 348.5, 349.5, 350.5, 351.5, 352.5, 353.5, 354.5, 355.5, 356.5, 357.5, 358.5, 359.5, 360.5, 361.5, 362.5, 363.5, 364.5, 365.5, 366.5, 367.5, 368.5, 369.5, 370.5, 371.5, 372.5, 373.5, 374.5, 375.5, 376.5, 377.5, 378.5, 379.5, 380.5, 381.5, 382.5, 383.5, 384.5, 385.5, 386.5, 387.5, 388.5, 389.5, 390.5, 391.5, 392.5, 393.5, 394.5, 395.5, 396.5, 397.5, 398.5, 399.5, 400.5, 401.5, 402.5, 403.5, 404.5, 405.5, 406.5, 407.5, 408.5, 409.5, 410.5, 411.5, 412.5, 413.5, 414.5, 415.5, 416.5, 417.5, 418.5, 419.5, 420.5, 421.5, 422.5, 423.5, 424.5, 425.5, 426.5, 427.5, 428.5, 429.5, 430.5, 431.5, 432.5, 433.5, 434.5, 435.5, 436.5, 437.5, 438.5, 439.5, 440.5, 441.5, 442.5, 443.5, 444.5, 445.5, 446.5, 447.5, 448.5, 449.5, 450.5, 451.5, 452.5, 453.5, 454.5, 455.5, 456.5, 457.5, 458.5, 459.5, 460.5, 461.5, 462.5, 463.5, 464.5, 465.5, 466.5, 467.5, 468.5, 469.5, 470.5, 471.5, 472.5, 473.5, 474.5, 475.5, 476.5, 477.5, 478.5, 479.5, 480.5, 481.5, 482.5, 483.5, 484.5, 485.5, 486.5, 487.5, 488.5, 489.5, 490.5, 491.5, 492.5, 493.5, 494.5, 495.5, 496.5, 497.5, 498.5, 499.5, 500.5, 501.5, 502.5, 503.5, 504.5, 505.5, 506.5, 507.5, 508.5, 509.5, 510.5, 511.5, 512.5, 513.5, 514.5, 515.5, 516.5, 517.5, 518.5, 519.5, 520.5, 521.5, 522.5, 523.5, 524.5, 525.5, 526.5, 527.5, 528.5, 529.5, 530.5, 531.5, 532.5, 533.5, 534.5, 535.5, 536.5, 537.5, 538.5, 539.5, 540.5, 541.5, 542.5, 543.5, 544.5, 545.5, 546.5, 547.5, 548.5, 549.5, 550.5, 551.5, 552.5, 553.5, 554.5, 555.5, 556.5, 557.5, 558.5, 559.5, 560.5, 561.5, 562.5, 563.5, 564.5, 565.5, 566.5, 567.5, 568.5, 569.5, 570.5, 571.5, 572.5, 573.5, 574.5, 575.5, 576.5, 577.5, 578.5, 579.5, 580.5, 581.5, 582.5, 583.5, 584.5, 585.5, 586.5, 587.5, 588.5, 589.5, 590.5, 591.5, 592.5, 593.5, 594.5, 595.5, 596.5, 597.5, 598.5, 599.5, 600.5, 601.5, 602.5, 603.5, 604.5, 605.5, 606.5, 607.5, 608.5, 609.5, 610.5, 611.5, 612.5, 613.5, 614.5, 615.5, 616.5, 617.5, 618.5, 619.5, 620.5, 621.5, 622.5, 623.5, 624.5, 625.5, 626.5, 627.5, 628.5, 629.5, 630.5, 631.5, 632.5, 633.5, 634.5, 635.5, 636.5, 637.5, 638.5, 639.5, 640.5, 641.5, 642.5, 643.5, 644.5, 645.5, 646.5, 647.5, 648.5, 649.5, 650.5, 651.5, 652.5, 653.5, 654.5, 655.5, 656.5, 657.5, 658.5, 659.5, 660.5, 661.5, 662.5, 663.5, 664.5, 665.5, 666.5, 667.5, 668.5, 669.5, 670.5, 671.5, 672.5, 673.5, 674.5, 675.5, 676.5, 677.5, 678.5, 679.5, 680.5, 681.5, 682.5, 683.5, 684.5, 685.5, 686.5, 687.5, 688.5, 689.5, 690.5, 691.5, 692.5, 693.5, 694.5, 695.5, 696.5, 697.5, 698.5, 699.5, 700.5, 701.5, 702.5, 703.5, 704.5, 705.5, 706.5, 707.5, 708.5, 709.5, 710.5, 711.5, 712.5, 713.5, 714.5, 715.5, 716.5, 717.5, 718.5, 719.5, 720.5, 721.5, 722.5, 723.5, 724.5, 725.5, 726.5, 727.5, 728.5, 729.5, 730.5, 731.5, 732.5, 733.5, 734.5, 735.5, 736.5, 737.5, 738.5, 739.5, 740.5, 741.5, 742.5, 743.5, 744.5, 745.5, 746.5, 747.5, 748.5, 749.5, 750.5, 751.5, 752.5, 753.5, 754.5, 755.5, 756.5, 757.5, 758.5, 759.5, 760.5, 761.5, 762.5, 763.5, 764.5, 765.5, 766.5, 767.5, 768.5, 769.5, 770.5, 771.5, 772.5, 773.5, 774.5, 775.5, 776.5, 777.5, 778.5, 779.5, 780.5, 781.5, 782.5, 783.5, 784.5, 785.5, 786.5, 787.5, 788.5, 789.5, 790.5, 791.5, 792.5, 793.5, 794.5, 795.5, 796.5, 797.5, 798.5, 799.5, 800.5, 801.5, 802.5, 803.5, 804.5, 805.5, 806.5, 807.5, 808.5, 809.5, 810.5, 811.5, 812.5, 813.5, 814.5, 815.5, 816.5, 817.5, 818.5, 819.5, 820.5, 821.5, 822.5, 823.5, 824.5, 825.5, 826.5, 827.5, 828.5, 829.5, 830.5, 831.5, 832.5, 833.5, 834.5, 835.5, 836.5, 837.5, 838.5, 839.5, 840.5, 841.5, 842.5, 843.5, 844.5, 845.5, 846.5, 847.5, 848.5, 849.5, 850.5, 851.5, 852.5, 853.5, 854.5, 855.5, 856.5, 857.5, 858.5, 859.5, 860.5, 861.5, 862.5, 863.5, 864.5, 865.5, 866.5, 867.5, 868.5, 869.5, 870.5, 871.5, 872.5, 873.5, 874.5, 875.5, 876.5, 877.5, 878.5, 879.5, 880.5, 881.5, 882.5, 883.5, 884.5, 885.5, 886.5, 887.5, 888.5, 889.5, 890.5, 891.5, 892.5, 893.5, 894.5, 895.5, 896.5, 897.5, 898.5, 899.5, 900.5, 901.5, 902.5, 903.5, 904.5, 905.5, 906.5, 907.5, 908.5, 909.5, 910.5, 911.5, 912.5, 913.5, 914.5, 915.5, 916.5, 917.5, 918.5, 919.5, 920.5, 921.5, 922.5, 923.5, 924.5, 925.5, 926.5, 927.5, 928.5, 929.5, 930.5, 931.5, 932.5, 933.5, 934.5, 935.5, 936.5, 937.5, 938.5, 939.5, 940.5, 941.5, 942.5, 943.5, 944.5, 945.5, 946.5, 947.5, 948.5, 949.5, 950.5, 951.5, 952.5, 953.5, 954.5, 955.5, 956.5, 957.5, 958.5, 959.5, 960.5, 961.5, 962.5, 963.5, 964.5, 965.5, 966.5, 967.5, 968.5, 969.5, 970.5, 971.5, 972.5, 973.5, 974.5, 975.5, 976.5, 977.5, 978.5, 979.5, 980.5, 981.5, 982.5, 983.5, 984.5, 985.5, 986.5, 987.5, 988.5, 989.5, 990.5, 991.5, 992.5, 993.5, 994.5, 995.5, 996.5, 997.5, 998.5, 999.5, 1000.5, 1001.5, 1002.5, 1003.5, 1004.5, 1005.5, 1006.5, 1007.5, 1008.5, 1009.5, 1010.5, 1011.5, 1012.5, 1013.5, 1014.5, 1015.5, 1016.5, 1017.5, 1018.5, 1019.5, 1020.5, 1021.5, 1022.5, 1023.5, 1024.5, 1025.5, 1026.5, 1027.5, 1028.5, 1029.5, 1030.5, 1031.5, 1032.5, 1033.5, 1034.5, 1035.5, 1036.5, 1037.5, 1038.5, 1039.5, 1040.5, 1041.5, 1042.5, 1043.5, 1044.5, 1045.5, 1046.5, 1047.5, 1048.5, 1049.5, 1050.5, 1051.5, 1052.5, 1053.5, 1054.5, 1055.5, 1056.5, 1057.5, 1058.5, 1059.5, 1060.5, 1061.5, 1062.5, 1063.5, 1064.5, 1065.5, 1066.5, 1067.5, 1068.5, 1069.5, 1070.5, 1071.5, 1072.5, 1073.5, 1074.5, 1075.5, 1076.5, 1077.5, 1078.5, 1079.5, 1080.5, 1081.5, 1082.5, 1083.5, 1084.5, 1085.5, 1086.5, 1087.5, 1088.5, 1089.5, 1090.5, 1091.5, 1092.5, 1093.5, 1094.5, 1095.5, 1096.5, 1097.5, 1098.5, 1099.5, 1100.5, 1101.5, 1102.5, 1103.5, 1104.5, 1105.5, 1106.5, 1107.5, 1108.5, 1109.5, 1110.5, 1111.5, 1112.5, 1113.5, 1114.5, 1115.5, 1116.5, 1117.5, 1118.5, 1119.5, 1120.5, 1121.5, 1122.5, 1123.5, 1124.5, 1125.5, 1126.5, 1127.5, 1128.5, 1129.5, 1130.5, 1131.5, 1132.5, 1133.5, 1134.5, 1135.5, 1136.5, 1137.5, 1138.5, 1139.5, 1140.5, 1141.5, 1142.5, 1143.5, 1144.5, 1145.5, 1146.5, 1147.5, 1148.5, 1149.5, 1150.5, 1151.5, 1152.5, 1153.5, 1154.5, 1155.5, 1156.5, 1157.5, 1158.5, 1159.5, 11

Football

Roy Collins on Maine Road's answer to Cliff Richard, a rare breed who has played for both Manchester and both Merseyside clubs

Titanic the ticket for Beardsley

PICTURE the scene. Peter Beardsley, having ended a three-month nightmare at Bolton by agreeing to a loan at Frank Clark's Manchester City, is three-quarters of an hour from their training ground, Rod Stewart wearing it well on his car CD player, when his mobile phone rings. Rod is giving it such big licks that it is a while before Beardsley picks up the phone. When he does, his wife tells him that Clark has been sacked. Even so, the Looney Tunes world of Manchester City, this occurrence is in a chart of its own.

It was such a bad omen that many people might have turned their car round or steered into the back of the nearest lorry bearing the name F.R. Clark, the City chairman's former company. Beardsley drove on to find Clark saying his farewells.

He says: "When I heard the news, in a funny sort of way, I felt guilty. But Frank is differ-

ent class. He stayed to speak to me, to tell me to look after myself. Then the new manager Joe Royle picked me against Ipswich that night, which was a good start."

If there were a player called Brian Rix, he would have played a record number of City games by now

Sadly, the story on the pitch was as familiarly predictable as the City story off it: hope of a new beginning when Kit Symons gave City an early lead, followed by despair and black comedy when Ipswich scored two late goals. If there were a player called Brian Rix, he would have made a record number of appearances for City by now.

Royce did not provide any new manager's pre-match champagne. It is a Vielli at Chelsea. Beardsley, however, still found a surprising amount of hubbly in the dressing room before the team ran out to rejoin reality. "I don't know whether my presence made a difference or if it was because of the new manager. But there was a good buzz. I only saw the

down side when Ipswich equalised and the lads may have started to think 'here we go again'."

It was a feeling that might have hit Beardsley when he took that phone call. Having been dropped, then sold, by Newcastle's manager Kenny Dalglish, he was left out and ignored at Bolton by Colin Todd before being thrown that lifeline from the bridge of the Titanic.

Beardsley, 37, a man of impeccable pedigree among the Bolton monarchs, was understandably affronted when Todd, who had virtually guaranteed a first-team place, dropped him for the match with Manchester United. He did so with the ominous, if bewildering, words: "I'm putting out a team today to try to win the game." What does he do for the rest of the match?

Beardsley, who had played only three times, says: "How could Todd say that I wasn't up to playing in big games? If he had said I was shit, I could have accepted it. But when I tried to talk to him he just said that it was his job to pick the team."

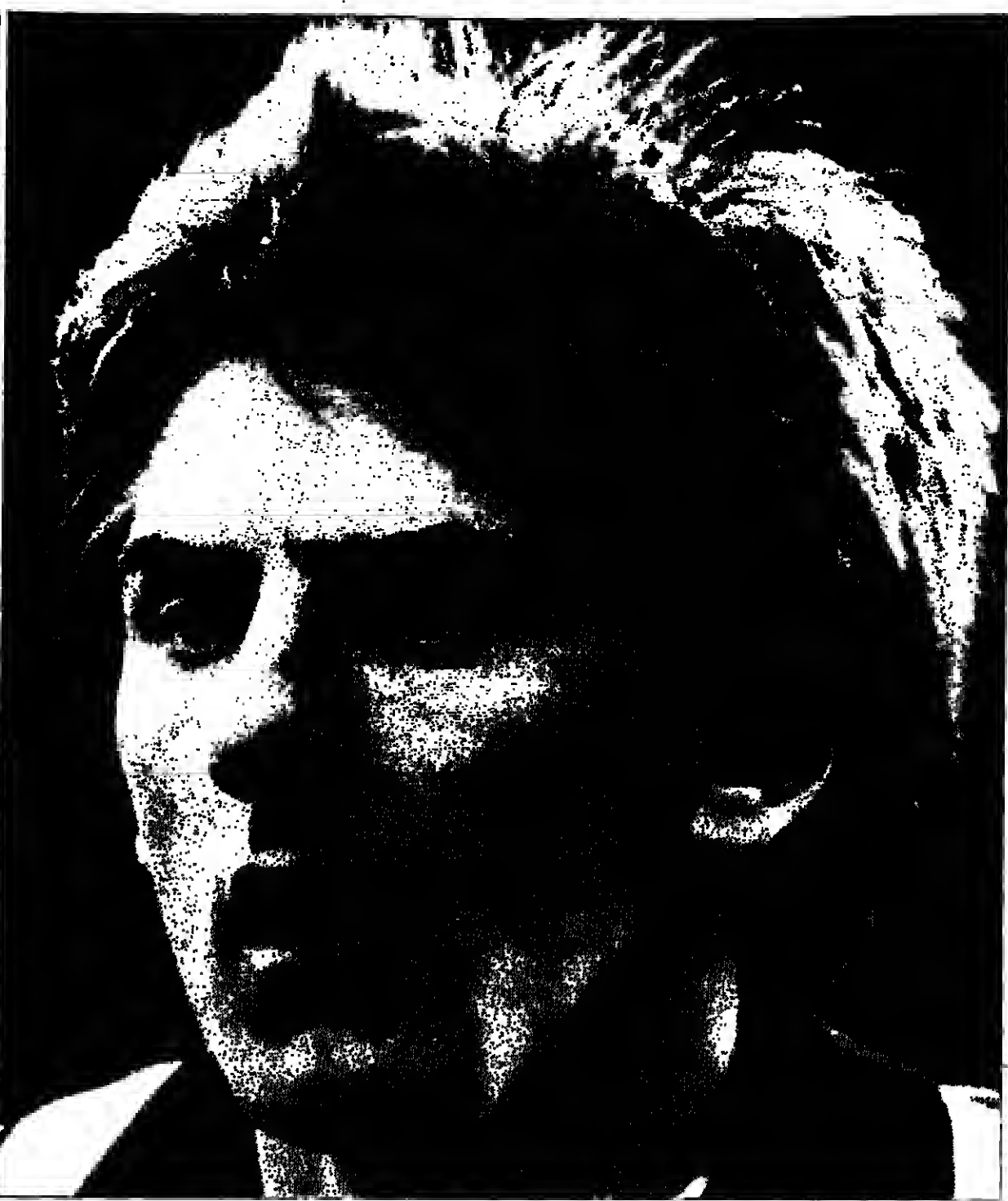
If Beardsley was unable to settle that argument with Todd, there is an abiding myth that he could only settle his differences with Dalglish with the aid of a hatchet.

He says: "Everyone thinks I've got a problem with Kenny. But when he made me Liverpool's record signing he acted as much as my manager, telling me what to ask for and what to expect. I was pretty poor in the first four or five months and it was Kenny who told me not to worry, that once I was settled into my new house everything would be okay. He didn't sell me from Liverpool, either — Graeme Souness did."

Beardsley has beard enough dispiriting words in managers' offices to drive him to a lifetime of counselling. Yet he is still intent on taking up a managerial post when he finally abandons his role as the Cliff Richard of football players.

His quiet image belies a football brain and it springs to life when you ask him to analyse the problems of Liverpool and Everton, both former clubs, who met in the Premiership on Monday.

Of Liverpool, he says: "They lack a voice in the team, someone who can organise and shape them in the way that Alan Hansen and Mark Lawrenson used to when I was there. Liverpool's problems are a bit like New-



The only way is up... There was a good buzz. I only saw the down side when Ipswich equalised, said Beardsley. DAVID MUNDEN

castle's under KK [Kevin Keegan]; they are committed to playing great attacking football and sometimes they forget to lock the back door. They look world beaters one week and the next they're all over the place."

After helping Liverpool to win the title in his first season, and another two seasons later, Beardsley arrived at Goodison Park during Howard Kendall's second, less successful, spell as manager. He nevertheless derived so much pleasure from his two seasons that he reluctantly left for Newcastle.

"Like Liverpool, Everton have missed some experience at the back. Dave Watson has been the biggest loss [when injured] because the kids need help. Danny Cadamarteri is a great prospect but Howard's been forced to throw him in. If he could pick

and choose him, it would be better for the boy's progress."

Using a favourite expression, he declares Kendall, top class. Frank Clark is top class. Dalglish is top class. Keegan and Rod, it goes without saying, are top class. And Beardsley himself? "TC."

Football Diary

Martin Thorpe

WATFORD are flying at the moment. So are Steve and Sheila Grant. Sheila, a die-hard Hornets fan, recently gave birth to a baby girl. It caused a bit of a fuss.

Firstly Sheila, despite living within walking distance of Hemel Hempstead hospital, insisted on having the baby in Watford General because it is in Vicarage Road.

"I've been a Watford fan for 20 years and that's where I wanted my baby born," she said.

But if you think that is a labour of love, wait until you hear about Steve, an RAF pilot who was in France when he learned his wife was about to deliver.

Perhaps in sympathy with Graham Taylor's preferred aerial tactics, colleagues arranged for the plane in which Steve was flying home to be diverted to a nearby airstrip from where he dashed to the hospital. He arrived with time to spare "wearing my rubber flying suit with tubes attached. I think the receptionist got a bit of a shock."

Added Sheila: "I thought having our first baby was going to be an adventure, but nothing quite so dramatic as this."

A YEAR ago he was only too certain that he did not want to become a manager. "I'm too sensitive," he said. "If I saw a player unhappy because I was leaving him out I would put him in. But that's no good for a manager." Gianluca Vialli, February 1997.

APARENTLY Ken Bates has insisted that the Magistrate still sells Rudi Gullit dolls — but they now come with a set of pins.

FOOTBALL's feelgood factor is spreading. Taking Wolves' lead, Palace and Sunderland have both started playing James Brown's I Feel Good when the home team scores. That's why stop there? James Brown's catalogue is bulging with goodies. How about Cold Sweat (opposition scores first), Money Won't Change You (expensive new forward misses

open goal) or Call Me Super Bad (local hard man sent off for 10th time).

AT LAST a new name in Arsenal's back four. Nigel Winterbottom, according to Ron Atkinson's commentary on Sunday.

RUUD GULLIT is already a non-person at Chelsea. His name was missing from the appearance list in Wednesday's match programme. We are assured it was a mistake.

THE Brazil striker Ronaldo has played with and against some great players in his time. But one in particular sticks out. Ronaldo perhaps. Or Zola. "That was the greatest performance I have ever seen from a goalkeeper," he said last week. "It was an honour to be on the same pitch as Kasey Keller."

THE Football Association has sent all its affiliated coaches a tempting invitation to spend 10 days studying tactics at the World Cup, including tickets to two quarter-finals and a semi-final plus four-star accommodation. There are, however, two drawbacks. The first is that the 10 days have to be spent in the stone-faced company of the FA's technical director Howard Wilkinson; the second is the bit at the end of the invitation: "I enclose my cheque for £5,842."

FULHAM's plans for a root-and-branch change to Craven Cottage have hit a snag. A huge plane tree at the ground stands in the way of the stadium redevelopment, but cannot be moved. Eleven years ago a Fulham fan, Dennis Bailey, had a preservation order placed on the tree in an attempt to scupper plans to build luxury flats on the site. Even he now admits that his best of intentions could backfire. "I just wanted to make the ground impossible to sell," he says. "I had to think the tree prevents the redevelopment." Touch wood, a solution can be found.

APARENTLY Newcastle United's poor form has hit sales of Newcastle Brown Ale. Everybody's switching to Kilkenny's.

France's Desailly tops Chelsea shopping list

Martin Thorpe

CHELSEA are set to take their spending on new players further this summer, the signing of the French international defender Marcel Desailly.

The new manager Gianluca Vialli has already signed Rangers' Denis Irwin, international midfielder Brian Laudrup on a free transfer.

But next season's Chelsea team could be even more fearsome following Italian reports

that Vialli has reached a verbal agreement with Desailly to move from Milan to Chelsea after the World Cup.

The 29-year-old, 22-year-old is rated at about \$5 million. He has 38 French caps and can also play in midfield. He has spent five seasons at Milan where he has picked up two Serie A titles and won the European Cup. He moved from Marseille where he won the French title and European Cup.

Chelsea, however, have denied reports linking them

with the French international midfielder Didier Deschamps. They were said to be close to signing the player from Juventus for \$4 million.

Yesterday the Chelsea managing director Colin Hutchinson said: "We tabled a \$4 million bid in the summer but they wouldn't do business. He has since signed an extension to his contract at Juventus and as far as we are concerned that is the end of it."

Willie Donachie yesterday left Sheffield United to return to Manchester City as first-team coach. The new manager Joe Royle has moved swiftly to bolster his team by signing the Sheffield Wednesday defender Lee Briscoe on loan.

Blackburn have "reluctantly agreed" to a second transfer request from their Norwegian international Lars Bohinen. The manager Roy Hodgson said the club will listen to offers for the 28-year-old midfielder who was signed from Nottingham Forest 2½ years ago for £700,000.

Tottenham hope to complete the £2.3 million signing of the 28-year-old Algerian midfielder Moussa Saïh from Valencia early next week.

The Republic of Ireland face a tough start to the European Championship qualifying campaign. They play two World Cup finalists: Croatia on September 5 in Dublin and Yugoslavia in Belgrade on October 10.

Premiership preview

Wenger's anger

Martin Thorpe

NOT everyone loves Luca. The new Chelsea manager, Roy Hodgson, said yesterday that he was "scathing" in his criticism of Arsenal's Arsene Wenger.

Wenger, reflecting on Wednesday's Coca-Cola Cup semi-final defeat at Stamford Bridge, accused Gianluca Vialli of diving and called the referee's dismissal of Arsenal's Patrick Vieira "absolutely ridiculous".

The Football Association's disciplinary department will no doubt be investigating the contents of Wenger's broadside ahead of today's Premiership clash at home to Crystal Palace, for which Arsenal may possibly be missing nine first-team players.

On Vieira's dismissal Wenger said: "If Vieira was sent off then 10 other players could have gone before we beat Arsenal for their game at Leicester while Chris Sutton misses Blackburn's trip to Southampton because of a virus. Alex Ferguson, however, will end his squad-rotation system and field his strongest side for the visit of Derby, whom Manchester United have never beaten in the Premiership.

Earlier, Poll had offered to go through the video of the game with Arsenal to explain why he had handed out nine yellow cards and one red.

Wenger will be without his captain Tony Adams and the striker Christopher Wreh today, both suspended, while Marc Overmars is away with Holland and will also miss next Wednesday's FA Cup fifth-round replay at Palace.

Ray Parlour and Gilles Grimandi are the latest to join Steve Bould, David Seaman and Ian Wright on the injured list, although Dennis Bergkamp and Nigel Winterburn are expected to pass late fitness tests.

Struggling Palace also have key players still missing: Neil Shipperley, Paul Warhurst, Michele Padovano and Attilio Lombardo.

Their new signing Matt Jensen is also doubtful. Third-placed Chelsea plan to retain the three-striker attack which helped them beat Arsenal for their game at Leicester while Chris Sutton misses Blackburn's trip to Southampton because of a virus. Alex Ferguson, however, will end his squad-rotation system and field his strongest side for the visit of Derby, whom Manchester United have never beaten in the Premiership.

Scottish preview

Rangers' weak will be put to the test over seven days

Patrick Glenn

IF Walter Smith's short-term ambition for Rangers is to be fulfilled in the coming week, his players will have to break new ground.

The manager's immediate objective is to come through three Premier Division matches in seven days unscathed. So far this season Rangers have not managed to win more than two in a row.

The crowded schedule starts with today's trip to Hibernian, bottom of the table and under the charge of Alex McLeish for the first time. It continues with the match at Kilmarnock on Tuesday and ends with Saturday's home game against the joint leaders Hearts.

"It's unusual to have three league games this close together," Smith said. "At the end of the week we'll be down to single figures in the number of matches left in the championship. There is little margin for error when you get to that stage."

"We gave an improved performance in the Scottish Cup win over Motherwell on Tuesday but we need to find consistency."

Paul Gascoigne is likely to remain on the bench. The England midfielder has looked thinner and jaded in recent weeks and played only the last seven minutes of the 3-0 win over Motherwell. Cer-

tain to return is the defender Sergio Porrini, who is free of suspension.

Brian Laudrup, beaving agreed to join Chelsea, will come under scrutiny by some fans and Smith said: "Laudrup has been under the microscope for a while but he's not the only one who has to turn in a good performance."

Celtic, behind the champions only on goal difference, are likely to be unchanged once again for the home match with Kilmarnock. "Every match we play now is a cup final," said their head coach Wim Jansen, "but our players know about pressure because they've played at high levels and they are used to it."

"What we need at this stage is total concentration. We played well when we beat Dundee in the cup on Monday, we were direct from the start and put them under pressure. We have to maintain that form."

Hearts, with the same number of points as the Old Firm, travel to Motherwell with a full-strength squad.

Gary Bolland is set to make his debut for St Johnstone at home to Aberdeen after his £100,000 move from Rangers yesterday. The 24-year-old defender is viewed as a replacement for Callum Davidson, who joined Blackburn Rovers for £1.7 million earlier this month.



Performance of the week: Gianluca Vialli (Chelsea), who in his first match as player-manager led the team to Wednesday's Coca-Cola Cup win against Arsenal and another Wembley final.

A N Other

ENGLAND still does not produce many centre-backs who are naturally comfortable on the ball and can combine defensive strength with attacking nous. This Merseyside product was an exception and after tunnelling his way into league football he wore a sheepskin with distinction, winning two championship medals. For a time he became a bantamweight but later returned to the fold. He won 28 caps in an international career hampered by injuries.

Last week: Joe Royle (Everton, Manchester City, Bristol City, Norwich City).

Motor Racing

Split spells end of the road for Tyrrell

Alan Henry

KEN TYRRELL yesterday quit the racing team he founded in 1960, after a clash with British American Racing which purchased the company for £18 million three months ago.

Tyrrell, 73, had intended to head up the company during a final transitional year before it was absorbed into a new operation spearheaded by the IndyCar manufacturer Reynard and backed by a

£200m, five-year budget from British American Tobacco. BAR's decision to sign the Brazilian driver Ricardo Rosset in preference to Tyrrell's nominee, the Dutchman Jos Verstappen, caused the split.

Tyrrell's son Boh also resigned as business development director.

The Tyrrell team made their Formula One debut in 1968, running French Matra cars for Jackie Stewart. The cars for Jackie's 1969 world Scot won the 1969 world championship at the wheel of a Tyrrell Matra and took two

more titles in 1971 and 1973 using Tyrrell's own Ford-engined F1 designs.

Tyrrell said there was no animosity but the BAR managing director Craig Pollock — he is also Jacques Villeneuve's manager — has acted in a way which bears out that Tyrrell is a flag of convenience on the way to establishing his own operation.

The team will now be controlled by the technical director Harvey Postlethwaite, who also assumes Ken Tyrrell's post as managing director.

Life and times of a racing original

1924: Born May 3, West Horsley, Surrey
1946: Demobilised from the RAF with a £30 gratuity and a new suit, goes into business and builds up timber business
1952: Races F3 and F2 cars with mixed success
1960: Establishes Tyrrell Racing
1967: Wins European F2 championship with Jackie Ickx in Matra-Ford
1968: F1 debut with Jackie Stewart in Matra-Ford
1969: Wins first world championship with Stewart and Matra
1970: Builds first Tyrrell-Ford F1 car, later to win 1971 and 1973 titles
1973: Jackie Stewart retires and team are rocked by death of his team-mate Francois Cevert
1983: Tyrrell team score last F1 win at Detroit with Michele Alboreto
1997: Tyrrell sells out to British American Racing

Hockey

St Albans ship 13 goals and prove it was no fluke

Pet Rowley

ST ALBANS' miserable season continued with their heaviest ever indoor defeat yesterday. They were beaten 13-1 by the champions Harrogate.

Halifax had a penalty saved before the Poles took an 8-0 half-time lead. Halifax scored St Albans' only goal.

Slough represent England in the women's European championship at Ruse, Bulgaria next weekend but should take their second title of the season first by beating Doncaster in the National League at

Cressex, High Wycombe, today.

Cannock, leaders of the men's National League, cannot be so confident. They go to Hounslow, who drew 2-2 at Cannock and always give them a hard game.

Cannock's only rivals for the championship, Canterbury and Southgate, meet at Polo Farm in Kent. Canterbury have yet to beat Southgate. James Duthie, the Southgate coach, may make a rare appearance to combat Canterbury's Sean Kerly, a fellow bronze medalist at the 1984 Olympics.

Five Nations Championship: England v Wales

Robert Armstrong says gushing Welsh howl may spell hell for the underachieving English today

Fear stalks Woodward's steps

WHEN Lawrence Dallaglio and the England management trooped into Twickenham's Rose Room to deliver their thoughts on today's match against Wales, they could easily have passed for bit players at an audition for an old Hammer Horror movie. The row of pale grim faces and the mood of sepulchral gloom was more suited to a dank Transylvanian castle than a sedate tea-room at HQ.

The stiff body language and mutual lack of eye contact spoke volumes for the uneasy relationships and prevailing loss of confidence that have followed from England's failure to win a single game in this season. Dallaglio, normally cheerful and outgoing, was also burdened by worries about his bruised rib cage, even though he has been given the all-clear by the England team doctor Terry Crystal.

Above all, the England squad are worried by their own inability to translate the concept of total rugby promoted by the coach Clive Woodward into a credible per-

formance under Test conditions. The sense of optimism generated by their startling 25-26 draw with New Zealand before Christmas all but evaporated a fortnight ago when England were given a cruel lesson in fluent football by an exciting new French side at Stade de France.

Now England have to find the means to counter the similarly unpredictable threat posed by the Welsh who, despite not having won at Twickenham since 1968, command widespread respect due to the good work of their progressive coach Kevin Bowring.

As Roger Uttley, the England manager, remarked the other day, Wales are no longer a soft touch home or away, though England may draw some comfort from the 42-7 defeat New Zealand inflicted on them at Wembley in November. Wales will not only offer a searching examination of England's obvious flaws in the tight and loose, but perhaps also call into question their right to be regarded as the top dogs to the British Isles.

No doubt the Welsh will remind themselves that only

six of the 22 Englishmen who toured South Africa with the Lions last summer found places in the triumphant Test side. It is a measure of Wales' potential in the championship that they can call on Lions such as Scott Gibbs, Allan Bateman, David Young and Neil Jenkins, as well as Robert Howley and Scott Quinnell,

have met from Wales for more than a decade. Gareth Llewellyn, the Harlequins lock, tends to produce his season's biggest performance against England while Jenkins, probably the world's best goalkicker, can close out games that are short of tries, as demonstrated with the Lions.

Not for the first time, Eng-

Bizarre selection strategy lies at the heart of England's problems

who were injured at the time of the tour. All six would certainly be good enough to get into Woodward's team were they English.

In the early Nineties, when Wales were regularly thrashed by England, probably only Iwan Evans, whose calf injury has paved the way for the return of Nigel Walker, would have measured up to the best England could offer.

Certainly today's team, particularly in the front row and midfield, are the most physical and competitive England will

land have offered hostages to fortune. They have pitched in the 21-year-old Phil Vickery for his first international against the experienced Cardiff prop Andrew Lewis and restored Matt Perry, the full-back sidelined by Bath.

Woodward has again picked a back row without a specialist. No. 8 — the job will be shared by Dallaglio and Richard Hill — as well as leaving out in-

formation backs such as Mike Catt and Phil de Glanville.

Indeed the England coach's bizarre and unconvincing selection strategy may be said to lie at the heart of England's problems. Woodward wants to develop an elite squad of around 30 players, each with abundant international experience and each capable of performing in two or three different positions. In theory that is a laudable aim: in practice it serves to foster a disorganised ever-changing side who fail to win matches.

Uttley is the only member of the management team with a proven track record of winning Tests, as the England coach in tandem with the manager Geoff Cooke in 1987-1991. However, his influence over Woodward and John Mitchell, the forwards coach, appears negligible. England, under Uttley, were once tight, hard and organised up front, now, according to Mitchell, they are "copping out" and "too soft".

He was referring specifically to the England pack's performance against France, but he could just as easily have had in mind the autumn internationals against Australia and South Africa. If the Wales forwards gain an advantage in the back row,

where Dallaglio and Hill were outmanoeuvred in Paris, then England will continue to navigate without a rudder.

In fact, Wales have the firepower behind the scrum to inflict maximum damage provided they can keep winning their own ball and snaffle one or two of England's throw-ins and put-ins. Richard Cockerill, recalled this week as England hooker, will have a crucial role to play at scrum and line-out. If he fires on all eight cylinders and finds time to give Vickery a helping hand, then the recognised war horses, Martin Johnson and Garath Archer, may swiftly get into their stride.

Desperation does not often produce great rugby, yet it can be the trigger for an important win. England, under Woodward, badly need to get out of the starting blocks. The irony is that Wales, for all their quality, also require tangible proof that they are on the right track to next year's World Cup.

Irresistible force will meet immovable object, perhaps in the shape of Gibbs. Welsh howl could easily turn out to be hell for England.

Twickenham teams

England	Wales
14. B. B. (S)	15. P. (S)
16. G. (S)	17. G. (S)
18. G. (S)	19. G. (S)
20. G. (S)	21. G. (S)
22. G. (S)	23. G. (S)
24. G. (S)	25. G. (S)
26. G. (S)	27. G. (S)
28. G. (S)	29. G. (S)
30. G. (S)	31. G. (S)
32. G. (S)	33. G. (S)
34. G. (S)	35. G. (S)
36. G. (S)	37. G. (S)
38. G. (S)	39. G. (S)
40. G. (S)	41. G. (S)
42. G. (S)	43. G. (S)
44. G. (S)	45. G. (S)
46. G. (S)	47. G. (S)
48. G. (S)	49. G. (S)
50. G. (S)	51. G. (S)
52. G. (S)	53. G. (S)
54. G. (S)	55. G. (S)
56. G. (S)	57. G. (S)
58. G. (S)	59. G. (S)
60. G. (S)	61. G. (S)
62. G. (S)	63. G. (S)
64. G. (S)	65. G. (S)
66. G. (S)	67. G. (S)
68. G. (S)	69. G. (S)
70. G. (S)	71. G. (S)
72. G. (S)	73. G. (S)
74. G. (S)	75. G. (S)
76. G. (S)	77. G. (S)
78. G. (S)	79. G. (S)
80. G. (S)	81. G. (S)
82. G. (S)	83. G. (S)
84. G. (S)	85. G. (S)
86. G. (S)	87. G. (S)
88. G. (S)	89. G. (S)
90. G. (S)	91. G. (S)
92. G. (S)	93. G. (S)
94. G. (S)	95. G. (S)
96. G. (S)	97. G. (S)
98. G. (S)	99. G. (S)
100. G. (S)	101. G. (S)

Howley the man to swing the chariot off course

Robert Armstrong meets the scrum-half who leads Wales on a personal mission

ALL Wales will be looking first and foremost to Robert Howley this afternoon to give them the success for which they pine after years of starvation. And the scrum-half, first choice for the Lions last summer and lately elevated to the national captaincy, gives them genuine hope of challenging England's supremacy among the home nations.

England know it too. Their manager Roger Uttley has identified the Cardiff man as the biggest threat in a Welsh back division that, given a decent share of ball, has sufficient fire power to destroy them at Twickenham.

Next season Howley, now 27, may be playing regularly in England if negotiations between Cardiff, Bath — who are apparently willing to pay £400,000 for his transfer — and the Welsh Rugby Union prove successful. For the moment he is happy to focus on his new role as captain — which, he says, gives him a wonderful opportunity "to put across my viewpoint as a player to the wider public".

Kevin Bowring, the Wales coach, has been the crucial influence behind Howley's rise from Bridgend favourite to

selection for the Lions, who unfortunately lost his services with a shoulder injury before the start of the Test series in South Africa.

"We've been developing for the past two years but now it's time to forget about development and instead stand up and deliver some results," Howley said. "It's true that every player learns something in every game he plays but we have to start putting a few wins together. In the short term we'd like to win the Five Nations but given that next year's World Cup is already on the horizon, we're also looking for pointers to the future from our A squad."

"The sooner we're able to pick the World Cup squad — and consolidate some of the A players into it — the quicker we'll be able to build a side capable of competing in the World Cup. Our ambition is to get into the quarter-finals and then see what happens. It's very important that we perform well in the World Cup as we are the hosts."

"At the start of the Five Nations everyone regarded England and France as the favourites but perhaps England underestimated how good France can be once they sort out the politics of their

rugby and pick their best side. Two years ago Wales defeated France and last year we had our best game in Paris for a very long time. Obviously we'd be looking for another good performance when we meet the French at Wembley next month."

"England play a power game but they came unstuck at the Stade de France. I think the Welsh back-line can look to move the England pack around the park but, having said that, we know we've not been producing the goods even though our back-line looks good on paper. In our recent game against Italy our backs failed to deliver, so hopefully the English will feel a Welsh backlash at Twickenham."

"I think the England pack will be the biggest threat to us; the second-rows Martin Johnson and Garath Archer are very committed players who've shown they can dominate the line-out against the likes of New Zealand and Australia. England's game-plan revolves around Dallaglio, Back and Hill in the back row; they are awesome players and I think Back was man of the match in the defeat by France. If you can stop their back row, you're already half way to beating England."

Whether Howley remains captain until the World Cup is likely to depend on two factors: Wales's performance against the top nations and the Cardiff scrum-half maintaining his home base in Wales. WRU politics would hardly permit Howley to guide the national side from the end of a telephone in Bath.

"I'm contracted to Cardiff for another two years and I'm also on contract to the WRU until the World Cup," he pointed out. "It's really down to Cardiff whether I move to

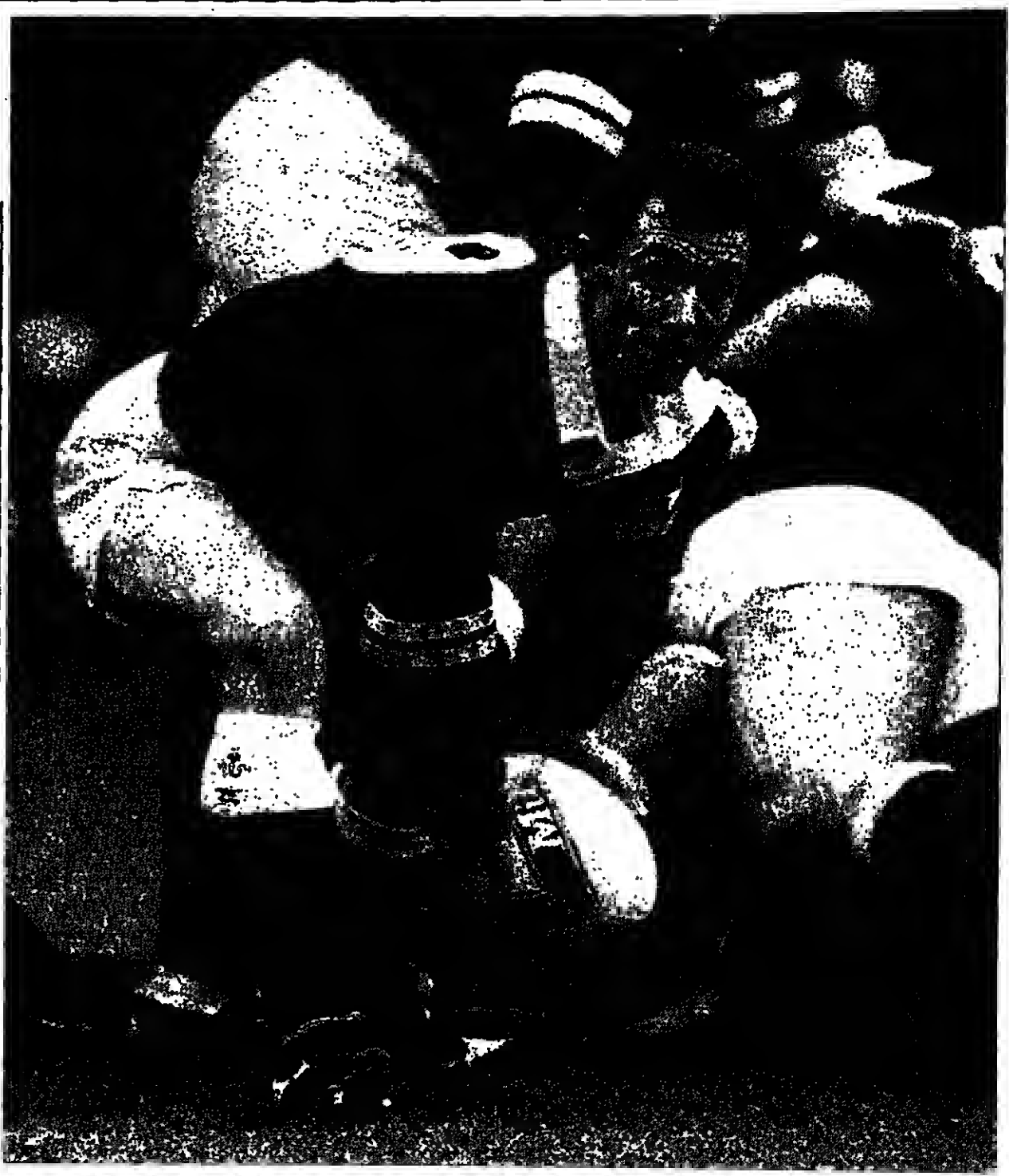
another club — all I can say is that I'm a person who honours his contract. It's an important year for me and I'll just concentrate on my job as Wales captain. I'll leave the politics and the legalities of my contracts for Cardiff and the WRU to sort out."

"Certainly club rugby in the Welsh First Division has been improved by the reduction in numbers to eight. Two years ago a club like Rhw Vale were also-rans. Now they have good players on board and they're a quality side. There are no easy games in the Premier Division any more, which has to be good for my development as a scrum-half."

Howley suggests that, the more decision makers the team has, the easier his own task becomes as skipper. "We were all very critical of our recent performance against Italy but we have total respect for each other and I know I have the complete support of the 22 players in the squad, including men like Dai Young, Scott Gibbs and Iwan Evans. I think the captain's job of the field, dealing with the media and so on, is secondary. A captain has to lead from the front and it's important that I've seen to be doing that on the field."

"It was disappointing to lose 42-7 to New Zealand before Christmas, yet if you look at the whole game — and at the scoring chances we missed — a fairer score might have been something like 37-21. Our aim is to be one of the top sides in world rugby and to achieve that we have to keep beating sides like Scotland and Ireland year after year. I believe we're up to the challenge of playing England and France but we'll know more about that by Saturday evening."

So may England.



Out to launch... Robert Howley, who is anxious to get Wales' back-line clear of England's back row

Centres of excellence

JEREMY GUSCOTT and Scott Gibbs have played five Tests together for the Lions but today they are on opposite sides for the first time since 1993.

Guscott, who will win his 50th cap for England, believes Gibbs and Allan Bateman are the best pair of centres in the world. "They complement each other superbly. Scott is strong and powerful while Allan has lightning speed and also defends very well."

"I have got to know them well through Lions tours. Scott was immense in both New Zealand and South Africa while Allan, in that summer when I was fortunate to get the nod."

"They have both played rugby league and are very organised. They help bring out the best in Arwel Iwan at outside-half and I think these days you have to look at the midfield three: Thomas is a magician who is well protected by Scott, a player who con-

stantly brings off the unexpected."

Gibbs said it was a tribute to Guscott's ability that he had been playing international rugby for 12 years without anyone collaring him.

"They never seem to get caught. He is one of the most astute players I have ever come across and timing is the key for him. I do not expect to get a crash tackle in on him. He would have to be sloppy for me to catch him and I have never known him to be that."

"He has tremendous awareness and can exploit the smallest of gaps. He is a real handful and so is Will Greenwood who has fully deserved his elevation to the England side."

"I was disappointed not to partner Will in any game with the Lions last summer. He can slice through defences at will and is very strong. It is going to be a real battle in midfield, but we will relive some memories in the evening."

Paul Rees

Paul Rees

Paul Rees

Paul Rees

Paul Rees

Paul Rees

Paul Rees

Paul Rees

Paul Rees

Paul Rees

No relegation suits Bristol and London Irish

England add two to top division

ENGLAND's top clubs reached agreement with the Rugby Football Union yesterday over plans to extend Premiership Two to two clubs to 14 next season. Thereafter only one club will be relegated and one promoted automatically, with a play-off between the runners-up in Premiership Two and the 13th side in One.

The decision means there will be no automatic relegation from Premiership One this season, which led to an immediate change of mood at Sunbury last night, where London Irish and Bristol met. They currently occupy the bottom two places. As things stand under the new rules, they will have only to play-off against Premiership Two's third and fourth teams to preserve their status.

Dick Best, appointed director of rugby by the Irish on Thursday with a brief to keep them in the first division, may as well go back to Western Province after all. Last year the Irish and Bristol survived the play-offs.

A slightly longer-term effect is that, with English clubs already ducking out of the European Cup next season and now no automatic relegation, many spring matches will become meaningless. But Doug Ash, chief execu-

tive of English First Division Rugby, looked further ahead. "Fourteen clubs in Premiership One produces 26 games and we need this because of present uncertainty over European competition," he said. "The previous rules, by which one third of the clubs in Premiership One were at risk of relegation every season, were a disincentive to long-term investment."

Italy were officially welcomed into the "Six Nations" Championship yesterday, starting in spring 2000. They are the first new entrant into the Five Nations since France to 1910.

Scotland A gave their seniors a boost in Edinburgh yesterday when they beat France A 24-20. Duncan Hodge, at fly-half, claimed 19 points, including a crucial second-half try as the Scots overcame a 13-point deficit.

Hodge charged down Richard Dourthe's attempted clearance from his own line midway through the second half and converted to put the Scots ahead for the first time. Though they threw away the advantage at a line-out, from which Aubrey Huerfied raced 45 metres for a try, Hodge came to the rescue again with two calmly taken penalties. Earlier Hugh Gilmour scored Scotland's first try.

Running rugby at its most Austintatious.

(Healey scores first try, £20 pays £260*)

1/7 ENGLAND	4/1 WALES	22/1 DRAW
First Tryscorer	Winning Points Margin	
12/1 K. Bracken	13/2 England win by 1-5 points	
12/1 A. Healey	5/1 England win by 6-10 points	
14/1 J. Guscott	4/1 England win by 11-15 points	
14/1 R. Howley	5/1 England win by 16-20 points	
14/1 M. Perry	8/1 England win by 21-25 points	
16/1 N. Back	7/1 Wales win by 1-5 points	
16/1 A. Bateman	18/1 Wales win by 6-10 points	
18/1 S. Gibbs	22/1 Wales win by 11-15 points	
20/1 S. Quinnell		

4/1 SCOTLAND	1/7 FRANCE	22/1 DRAW
First Tryscorer	Winning Points Margin	
10/1 C. Lamont	7/1 Scotland win by 1-5 points	
12/1 P. Carboneau	13/2 Scotland win by 6-10 points	
16/1 G. Armstrong	5/1 France win by 1-5 points	
18/1 T. Cassipieda	5/1 France win by 6-10 points	
20/1 G. Townsend	4/1 France win by 11-15 points	
25/1 R. Wainwright	5/1 France win by 16-20 points	

Other scores on recent. Penalty tries do not count for first try scorer. *Winnings shown include the £20 you bet with deduction paid. For the very latest odds, call Ladbrokes Telex 606 (LDB).

FOR INSTANT BETTING
0990 924 924

Call now 010 924 924. 16+ only. Ladbrokes telephone betting rules apply.

Ladbrokes
For a bet, Ladbrokes are favourite.

Trick for Telfer is to conquer French without tears

Feathery French connection ... Simon Holmes finds himself having to come to terms with a life-long fear of cockerels at Murrayfield MURDO MACLEOD

"As for myself I feel bitter than ever. Because of my late start to rugby, and that injury. I feel younger than I am and I have maintained my ambition. There's a World Cup on the horizon and I'd like to be taking part in it."

Meanwhile, his new Scotland team-mates are steering him away from those traps.

Hilton to the Home Counties
 Hrawl of Damian Cronin.
 And in their back row the
 authentic John Buchanesque
 brogue of Rob Wainwright will
 be heard alongside the quiet
 Geordie Peter Walton and now
 the Cumbrian tones of Holmes.
 In the po-faced world of pro-

Men's Combined 4x5km cross-country:
1. Norway 64min 11.5sec; 2. Finland
56 30.4, 3. France 55 53.4
Women's Cross-country 30km free-
style: 1. Y Chnepalova (Rus) 1hr 22min
01.5sec; 2. S Belmondo (It) 1:22.11.7; 3. L
Lazudina (Rus) 1:23 15.7.

and add two
p division



New queen on the block
Tara Lipinski:
the youngest
champion of all
22



Something in the City
New departure
for Peter
Beardsley
23

The Guardian Sport

www.football.guardian.co.uk



Fallon... 'instructed'

Leading jockey 'stopped horse'

Ken Oliver

KIEREN FALLON, the champion Flat jockey, allegedly stopped a horse from having a winning chance in a handicap at Newmarket in April, 1995, the High Court was told yesterday.

Derek Thompson, the Channel 4 racing presenter, said that Fallon told him that Jack Ramsden — the husband of the trainer Lynda Ramsden — instructed the jockey to stop Top Cees from winning before the start of the Swaffham Handicap at Newmarket.

Fallon and the Ramsdens are suing Mirror Group Newspapers, publisher of The Sporting Life, over a "savage verbal onslaught" in an unsigned editorial in May, 1995, after Top Cees had won the Chester Cup — three weeks after his run at Newmarket.

The case has been running for three weeks and will be resumed on Monday.

Full report, page 19

Five Nations Championship: England v Wales

Bruised England face hard facts

Paul Hayward sees the need for artisans rather than artists to break the losing habit against the upbeat Welsh at Twickenham

IN THE newly spruced up England dressing rooms a crimson puochbag hangs invitingly in the warm-up pit and the cross of St George is splashed around like bunting. On a table a ghetto-blaster sits ready to thump out combative dance music from the Ministry of Sound. England can forget about the Grand Design. Today is all about obliterating the Welsh.

Defeat for England would equal their worst winless record of eight matches set in 1971-72, when the Welsh were a force of nature and the English dazed victims. Clive Woodward is riding to the edge of the precipice as his battered team hunt a first victory since the opening Test against Argentina way back in May. Style and experimentation and the 1999 World Cup are irrelevant. Breaking a losing habit is all that counts.

Rescuing England from trauma has never been high on the list of Welsh priorities and Kevin Bowring's team will see the apprehension in the home team's eyes at 2pm. England's meat-packers bullied the Celts up front for so long that a mighty desire for vengeance has built up. Not just that, but Wales are claiming to be on the verge of yet another renaissance and have the pace and power in the back division to show Woodward and his fellow reformers in the England camp just how it should be done.

Woodward's dream went missing in Paris two Saturdays ago and there has been pressure on him to return to the same brand of grim functionalism which distinguishes Twickenham from Stade de France. They can be artists some other time, the argument runs, but must be winning artisans today. "Having to listen to ridicule [after

the defeat in Paris] was quite hard," said Woodward's assistant John Mitchell at Twickenham yesterday. "I wouldn't say I'd slit my wrists, but I'd certainly question my own ability if we play again the way we did against France."

England will be led on to the field by Jeremy Guscott as he wins his 50th cap. There the romance and bonhomie will end. "I can't be thinking about my 50th cap when I've got Scott Gibbs opposite me," said Guscott as the Wales full-back Neil Jenkins was metronomically practising his kicks.

Turn up the ghetto-blaster and forget about the Grand Design; today is about obliteration

"The Welsh backline is as good as anyone's, and Allan Bateman [Gibbs's midfield partner] is probably the best centre in the world." Reviving the spirit of the Lions tour, he waved to Bateman in the car park. This afternoon they will behave like two alley cats fighting over a salmon.

Guscott ought to bring to England's attacking play the kind of dizzying and elusive surges that had Wales spinning on their heels when he came on for Joo Sleight in Cardiff last March. How different English fortunes looked then. Jack Rowell's "interactive rugby" at least gave them a semblance of forward momentum, even if the series of great autumn challenges

they were heading towards turned out to be a granite wall.

England are a brave and muscular bunch who can grapple their way back into matches even when their technical and tactical capabilities look as weak as they did last time out. But there is a suspicion that a sequence of physical poundings, coupled with several poor results, has taken the edge off a team that had been so accustomed to winning. A promising rallying cry would be to repeat the performance England somehow mustered when they were last at Twickenham and the All Blacks were held mesmerisingly to a 26-all draw.

It is easy to forget that of the Five Nations only England were forced by a sadistic fixtures organiser into four Tests, on successive Saturdays, against the world's three strongest nations. More muscle bulk and a more breathless rhythm to games means ever more bruising collisions.

Close up, these days, rugby sounds like American football without the padding, and there are those who believe that only now is the cumulative damage from the Lions tour and that draining autumn programme really starting to emerge.

It showed in Lawrence Dallaglio in Paris when his surges took him across the field rather than down it. "He hasn't had a rest since the Lions trip and he may be required to go on a tour to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa this summer," Mitchell said. "He'll get back on July 6 and domestic rugby will start again on August 26. You only have to look at the amount of tape on these players to see what they go through."

Dallaglio is English rugby's future, a flinty, line-leading captain with a clear head and voice. But against the hungry Welsh he is facing another ferociously intense 80 minutes. If England lose heavily, Dallaglio's body may not be the only casualty of the weekend.

Five Nations preview, pages 22 & 23



Flight captain... Lawrence Dallaglio will be looking for an uplift in England's fortunes today

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARNON

Distinctive. Unique. And that's just the

who drink it.

NESCAFÉ
BLEND
-37-

NESCAFÉ
BLEND
-37-

It would be neat to say that it is Freemasonry that provides the social link between a policeman who reads unconvincingly and clumsily from a notebook that looks as though he's just bought it, and an enormously posh and begowned arbiter who, like Enoch Powell, combines beautiful speech with drooling lunacy.

Jeremy Hardy

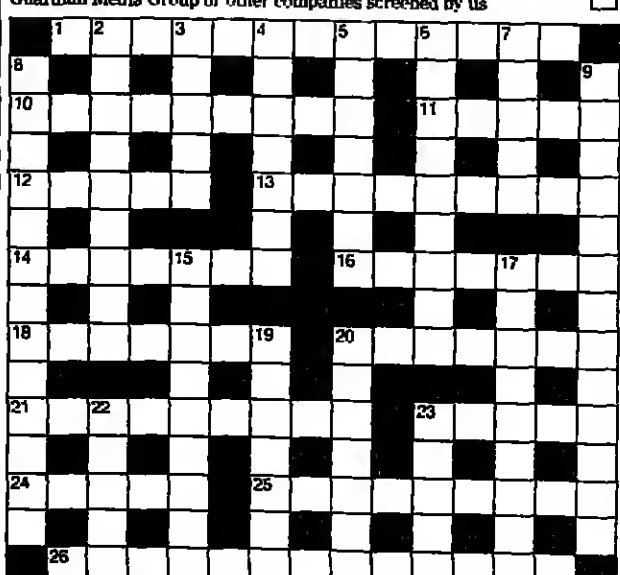
The Week
page 16

Guardian COLLINS Crossword 21,204

A copy of the Collins English Dictionary will be sent to the first five correct entries drawn. Entries to The Guardian Crossword, P.O. Box 14641, London, EC1R 3JX, or Fax to 0171 713 4735 by first post on Friday. Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday March 2.

Name _____
Address _____

Tick here if you do not wish to receive further information from the Guardian Media Group or other companies screened by us ☐



Set by Shed

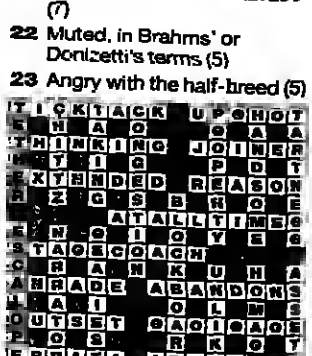
Across
1 What's laid, they say, with tokens could provide a meal (5,3,5)
10 Called in? Not in to an ape (5-4)
11 Displayed horsemanship round display of horsemanship (5)
12 Culture keeps the French on the ball (5)

13 Novelist entering department store in women's clothing (5)
14 Dash into highway to point to har (7)
16 Sound advice for local government (7)
18 Site of Joshua's first heroic exploit (7)
20 Receiver's crime (7)
21 Perhaps he's brought in to disturb and cause a shake-up (9)

23 Influence of third helping of alcohol on yob (5)
24 Penniless highwayman in the city (5)
25 'Shellfish eating hound' — artist's portrayal of evolution (9)
26 Ship on the wave is a fairground attraction (6, 7)

Down

2 Nomad at length interrupts model party-goer (9)
3 King in robe upset by cant (5)
4 Newspaper's report of rectal (7)
5 Vigorous mounted policemen apprehending a large number (7)
6 One way and another get into a temper with spirits (4,5)
7 German entering ring has to use footwork (5)
8 Old play about 19 right-thinking people (5,8)
9 Hundreds, sick, mat coy doctor for operation (13)
15 Up late? Maybe not — nuclear energy's gone (9)
17 Many proceeding according to plan to the meeting place (9)
19 Person in charge if force is deployed (7)
20 Spice Girl loves to embrace (7)
22 Muted, in Brahms' or Donizetti's terms (5)
23 Angry with the half-breed (5)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,204

NEWSPAPERS
RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up 41.4% of the new material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1997

Handwritten signature or mark